



COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER AT WEST POINT

# CTC SENTINEL

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## About the CTC Sentinel

The Combating Terrorism Center is an independent educational and research institution based in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy, West Point. The CTC Sentinel harnesses the Center's global network of scholars and practitioners to understand and confront contemporary threats posed by terrorism and other forms of political violence.

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## Field Notes on Iraq's Tribal Revolt Against Al-Qa`ida

By David J. Kilcullen



A Sons of Iraq fighter guards a checkpoint in Baghdad. - Photo by Tom A. Peter/The Christian Science Monitor/Getty Images

ONE OF THE MOST striking aspects of operations in Iraq during the "surge" of 2007 was the growing tribal uprising against al-Qa`ida. In late 2006 and 2007, this uprising began to transform the war. I spent considerable time on the ground throughout May and June 2007 in Baghdad and the surrounding districts working with U.S. and Iraqi units, tribal and community leaders and fighters engaged in the uprising. Listening to them talk, watching their operations and participating in planning and execution alongside American commanders supporting them provided insight into their motivations and thought processes. Moreover, during this process of participant observation I was able to gather some field data on the relationship between globally-oriented terrorists in Iraq (primarily al-Qa`ida) and the locally-focused militants who found themselves fighting as "accidental" guerrillas in the early

part of the war, only to turn against the terrorists in 2007.

To understand what follows, it is necessary to realize that Iraqi tribes are not somehow separate, out in the desert, or remote; rather, they are powerful interest groups that overlap with and permeate all parts of Iraqi society. More than 85% of Iraqis claim some form of tribal affiliation. Iraqi tribal leaders represent a competing power center with the formal institutions of the state, and the tribes themselves are a parallel hierarchy that overlaps with formal government structures and political allegiances at every level. For most Iraqis, tribal affiliation exists alongside other strands of identity—religious, ethnic, regional and socio-economic—that interact in complex ways, rendering meaningless the facile division into Sunni, Shi`a and Kurd. The reality of Iraqi national character is much more complex, and tribal

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identity plays an extremely important part in it, even for urbanized Iraqis. Therefore, the tribal revolt was not a remote riot on a reservation: it was a major social movement with the potential to significantly influence most Iraqis wherever they live. This article tentatively examines some of the reasons for the tribal revolt against al-Qa`ida, explores why certain tribes worked with coalition forces, and highlights key lessons learned during the process.

#### The Tribal Rebellion Against Al-Qa`ida

In 2007, Iraq experienced a spreading social movement, expanding along kinship lines that could best be described as a tribal rebellion against al-Qa`ida in Iraq (AQI) by a large body of accidental guerrillas who had formerly allowed themselves to be exploited by the *takfiris* (*takfiriyyun*). It would be naïve, or perhaps reflect a lack of awareness of the history of disappointed expectations with Iraqi tribes since 2003, to interpret

**“What you have to remember is that there are two things in Iraq, custom (*adat*) and religion (*din*). Sometimes they go hand in hand, sometimes they clash. When they go hand in hand all is well, but when they clash they create discord (*fitna*).”**

this rebellion as necessarily indicating support for the Iraqi government or for coalition forces. The tribes were not pro-coalition, much less pro-government but, rather, anti-al-Qa`ida. Nevertheless, our experience showed that, if correctly handled, the tribes could often be brought to see that their best interests lay in supporting the government and cooperating with the security architecture of the new Iraq. Yet this was not an integral part of their original motivation and required time, careful negotiation and confidence-building.

The rebellion against AQI was motivated, according to informants,<sup>1</sup> by a backlash against al-Qa`ida's exclusive emphasis on religion and disregard of custom. One key informant explained:

What you have to remember is that there are two things in Iraq, custom (*adat*) and religion (*din*). Sometimes they go hand in hand, sometimes they clash. When they go hand in hand all is well, but when they clash they create discord (*fitna*). When you think about tribes, you almost take the religion out of it. The tribes care about *adat*. For example, if you ask a Shammari “what religion are you?” he will say “I am a Shammari.”

In Anbar, the tribes are Dulaim and Zobai. The Zobai are an *ashira* of the Shammari [confederation]. The Zobai did not support Saddam 100%, though they got lots of money from him. He paid them to guard the roads and the oil pipelines. But they went their own way when they wanted to. When you [Americans] invaded, the Qa`ida came to the tribes and said “We are Sunni, you are Sunni. The Americans are helping the Shi`a, let's fight them together.” And so the tribes fought the occupation forces alongside the Qa`ida. Now, after a while, the tribes fell out with the Qa`ida. They began to argue over their women. The Qa`ida would come to the shaykh and say “give me your daughter” or “give me your sister.” I mean in marriage. The shaykh would say no, because in the tribal custom they protect their women and do not give them to outsiders. I mean, sometimes two tribes exchange their women as wives to settle a dispute, but they don't just let outsiders, who are not of the tribe, marry their women. The Qa`ida started arguing with them, saying “you must give me your daughter because this is sanctioned by religion, and in the Qur'an it says that tribal customs are ignorant.” So the shaykhs became angry and clashed with the Qa`ida because

they were not giving any role to tribal custom, and were giving it all to religion.

Then the al-Qa`ida killed a tribal leader because of an argument over this. Then the tribes turned against them because they believed they were trying to rule over them and tell them what to do. The Qa`ida killed a shaykh's sons, and killed other people and attacked the fuel smuggling that the tribes use to make money. Then more and more leaders turned against the *takfiriyyun* and now the tribes are fighting al-Qa`ida.<sup>2</sup>

The Zobai tribe mentioned here has been closely associated with the 1920 Revolution Brigades and the Islamic Army in Iraq. Zobai tribal leaders have fought against the coalition since 2003, and the tribe has often shown a high degree of unity. By mid-2007, however, the Zobai appeared to be turning against AQI in most of its tribal area. Indeed, there often seemed to be a “Zobai connection” somewhere in tribal groups opposing AQI. For example, one rural farming district in the southern belts of Baghdad experienced constant low-level warfare between Zobai and AQI fighters, with AQI or Zobai corpses turning up in the canals most mornings.<sup>3</sup> The conflict oscillated in terms of who had the upper hand. The Zobai did not directly approach coalition commanders for support, but local shaykhs requested permission to raise an armed neighborhood watch and began policing their own area against AQI and sought to cooperate with coalition forces.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, one group of fighters in an urban district in Baghdad was non-tribal, with leadership provided by imams of local mosques opposed to AQI. These imams drew on local urban youth to police their streets and fight the terrorists, but their military advisor and “technical expert” was a Zobai clan leader with previous insurgent experience. His assistance was called in by one of the local imams

<sup>2</sup> This informant quote is drawn from Fieldnote I3/MN1/20070605.

<sup>3</sup> Personal communication, company commander responsible for Sadr al-Yusufiyya, company patrol base south of Baghdad, May 28, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Fieldnotes, combat advising in AO Commando, Sadr al-Yusufiyya district, May-June 2007.

<sup>1</sup> All Iraqi informants gave their prior informed consent to the use and publication of their comments, and informant material did not derive from detainee interrogation.

who was related to him through a tribal connection.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, Zobai tribesmen in Abu Ghurayb district, west of Baghdad, were fighting AQI for most of 2007 and demonstrated increasing willingness to cooperate with coalition forces, although not initially with the

**“The rebellion against AQI was motivated, according to informants, by a backlash against al-Qa`ida’s exclusive emphasis on religion and disregard of custom.”**

Iraqi government.<sup>6</sup> Tribal fighters who negotiated or engaged with coalition commanders in 2007 tended to make similar requests. In one case, these included the following set of demands:

- Local security must be led by local forces who reserve the right to run their own checkpoints and neighborhood watch organizations.
- Local leaders must have a role in deciding who is to be detained, including the power to detain and question suspects themselves, and the power to give amnesty to individuals who promise not to fight for the terrorists any longer.
- Coalition forces are requested to help smooth any issues of deconfliction with Iraqi security forces. In some areas, locals asked for some form of recognition symbol so that they would not be mistaken for terrorists.
- Some leaders asked for logistical support (typically, food, fuel and propane for cooking) from coalition forces.

- Local leaders and their forces almost always wanted to be integrated into the Iraqi government structure as a local

police force, legitimately employed under the Iraqi government but responsible for security in their own districts.

- Some leaders requested that Iraqi police and army units, regarded as sectarian, stay out of their area. In some cases, they were willing to accept Iraqi security forces provided they were accompanied by coalition forces.<sup>7</sup>

In most areas where local groups began working with coalition forces, they behaved responsibly. In one incident in Sadr al-Yusufiyya, a southern belt district, the local neighborhood watch discovered two terrorists (thought to be AQI) in the act of emplacing a roadside IED. They forced the terrorists to dig up the IED, and then handed them over to coalition forces for questioning. In this area, IED incidents dropped precipitously over several months from several per day along the main road (through a farming community in canal country) in 2006 and early 2007, to zero incidents by the middle of the year. This period coincided with the development of a close working relationship with local shaykhs on the part of Captain Palmer Phillips, an extremely energetic and capable local U.S. company commander who was given solid support by his battalion and brigade commander, and benefited from a highly capable group of platoon commanders and senior non-commissioned officers whose application of counter-insurgency techniques was exemplary. This also led to the formation of a neighborhood watch to guard local villages, roads and bridges. The main issue in this area was that the tribes wished to be recognized as a Provisional Police Unit (PPU) and provided with recognition symbols that would allow them to work against local terrorist groups without being mistaken for insurgents and accidentally fired upon by coalition forces.<sup>8</sup>

In Zaydun district, a farming and canal area west of Baghdad that had long been noted for the presence of extremist groups that had dispossessed the tribal establishment and radicalized the

district’s youth,<sup>9</sup> the 2/7 Marines under the energetic and insightful Lieutenant-Colonel Joe L’Etoile found themselves in the middle of a complex inter-tribal conflict. Local tribes backed the 1920 Revolution Brigades, a Sunni secular nationalist insurgent movement, in a fight against extremists from AQI. Each group fought both each other and the coalition, dispersing when confronted by superior coalition firepower and contracting to confront each other.<sup>10</sup> The violence between the two groups was exceptionally bloody throughout the first half of 2007 but, through a skillful series of political maneuvers and careful targeting, Lt. Col. L’Etoile successfully played the two groups off against each other, devising a strategy of “fighting AQI to the last 1920s guy.”<sup>11</sup> After a period of time in which AQI so eroded and damaged the 1920 Revolution Brigades that the local insurgents were desperate, expecting annihilation and willing to ally with almost anyone in order to get back at al-Qa`ida, Lt. Col. L’Etoile approached them through a local tribal intermediary—again, a Zobai—in partnership with the local Iraqi Army battalion.<sup>12</sup> This joint Iraqi-U.S. approach immediately brought the 1920s insurgents to a cease-fire agreement, and they ultimately partnered with U.S. and Iraqi forces, joined local security force units and cooperated to defend their communities against both Shi’a sectarian militias and AQI extremists. This brought a remarkable turnaround in the Zaydun situation over only a few months in mid-2007.<sup>13</sup>

Another example of local leaders’ responsible attitude could be seen in their approach to amnesty and parole. Community leaders tended to draw a distinction between terrorist leaders and the rank-and-file. As one respondent pointed out, “they want the terrorist leaders gone, but the followers and ordinary fighters are their own children, so they want them freed of terrorist leaders, not killed or

5 Personal conversations, officers of 1/5 Cavalry Regiment, and personal participant observation, Amiriyya, Baghdad, June 2007.

6 Personal communication, Colonel J.B. Burton, commander of TF Dagger BCT, Northwest Baghdad, April 2008.

7 Lieutenant-Colonel Dale Kuehl, “Ameriya Freedom Fighters: Meeting with Dr. Kilcullen MNF-I Senior Counterinsurgency Advisor,” briefing, June 2007.

8 Fieldnotes, combat advising in AO Commando, Sadr al-Yusufiyya district, May-June 2007.

9 Personal interview, Dr. Mary Habeck, Washington, D.C., May 2008.

10 Personal interview, Lieutenant-Colonel Joe L’Etoile, Washington, D.C., April 2008

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 This information is drawn from an unclassified briefing with Lieutenant-Colonel Joe L’Etoile.



driven away.”<sup>14</sup> This, indeed, is a classic statement of the distinction between accidental guerrillas and globally-focused extremists. Therefore, local leaders who captured rank-and-file terrorists originating from the local district typically held them in custody until they agreed to sign an undertaking never to work with AQI again. The local leaders then summoned their parents to collect them, and they were released into their parents’ custody, with their clan or tribe undertaking to enforce the agreement and ensure they never again worked with the terrorists.<sup>15</sup>

This tribal process involved clear political dangers. The Shi’a-dominated government, for one, was and remains suspicious of a movement that has so far largely occurred within Sunni-majority districts, and sees local fighters as temporary allies at best, tomorrow’s enemies at worst. Second, the tribes themselves (particularly the Zibai leaders) sometimes talk as if they see their actions as a precursor to expanding their influence to regain control of formerly Sunni-majority districts in Baghdad.<sup>16</sup> Third, at least some (though as yet undetected) human rights abuses are probably occurring and might be laid at our door if we cooperated with local forces but then failed to act adequately to prevent abuse. Finally, the existence of armed security forces, however informal, operating outside the Iraqi government chain of command might be seen as a precursor to warlordism, or as compromising Iraq’s sovereignty.

In my judgment, as of early June 2007, these concerns were real but manageable. An armed and organized Sunni population was not necessarily a destabilizing political factor. It created an informal authority structure that helped build political unity and social coherence within the Sunni community, moving away from the situation of hundreds of fragmented and independent insurgent groups, and community leaders unable to control them, which plagued the coalition’s

initial attempts to de-escalate the Sunni insurgency. Moreover, the existence of an armed local movement of Sunnis created a “balance of power” effect: it deterred Shi’a extremist groups such as Jaysh al-Mahdi that might otherwise have thought of “cleansing” Sunni communities, and reduced the fear of permanent victimization that had caused Sunni leaders to avoid involvement in

**“The Shi’a-dominated government, for instance, was and remains suspicious of a movement that has so far largely occurred within Sunni-majority districts.”**

the new Iraq. It also contradicted the al-Qa’ida propaganda claim that AQI was all that stood between Iraqi Sunnis and a Shi’a-led genocide. These factors, correctly handled, made local security forces a key element in a balanced, self-regulating, self-sustaining local security architecture that could potentially survive without coalition supervision. Moreover, a mechanism to enroll tribal fighters into legitimate security forces as local police—which is, after all, what the tribes most wanted—had the potential to bring these forces under government control, thus preventing the development of non-state forces that could undermine sovereignty.

Key lessons for coalition forces and commanders emerged from this process. We found that we had to:

- Treat local tribal irregular fighters as local allies, or a local “coalition of the willing,” not as “our new employees.” They began this rebellion because al-Qa’ida tried to push them around; the coalition needs to ensure that it does not make the same mistake. Local fighters were not under our command; instead, we approached them with “tribal diplomacy.”

- Build a personal partnership relationship, based on honor and trust, with local leaders.

- Expect leaders to act primarily in accordance with their group’s interests, not their formal undertakings.

- Expect overlapping and sometimes conflicting spheres of authority within tribal groups, rather than a military-style chain of command. One group may respond to several different shaykhs to different degrees.

- Look for leaders who occupy positions of authority within several local power networks (tribe, mosque, business, governance). These are likely to be survivors who can influence others.

- Be wary of non-tribal Iraqis looking down on tribal shaykhs and treating them as ignorant or of no account.

- Avoid pushing a shaykh to make commitments until he is sure his tribal group will support him.

- Channel assistance to a tribal group through the local shaykh to cement his patronage power and increase his authority, thus making it easier for him to make agreements “stick.”

- Develop coordination mechanisms, and communications channels, to local leaders that enable deconfliction between local “neighborhood watch” organizations and coalition forces.

- Work to persuade local leaders of the benefits of supporting the Iraqi government—we found we could not expect support for the government to be part of their initial motivation, which was opposition to al-Qa’ida.

- Expect a degree of mistrust of Iraqi army and police forces on the part of tribal leaders, and be prepared to act in the role of an “honest broker” in promoting cooperation between local fighters and Iraqi forces.

- Develop mechanisms for handing over locals who have been detained by neighborhood watch groups, including requiring clear standards of evidence and compliance with human rights before an individual is accepted into the Iraqi or coalition judicial system.

<sup>14</sup> This quote is drawn from an Iraqi tribal leader’s conversation with a U.S. battalion commander in central Baghdad in July 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Personal communication, Lieutenant-Colonel Dale Kuehl, Baghdad, June 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Personal conversation, former insurgent leader, Baghdad, June 2007.

### Tentative Conclusions

Although the requirements for counter-insurgency in a tribal environment may not be written down in the classical-era field manuals, building local allies and forging partnerships and trusted networks with at-risk communities seems to be one of the keys to success. Indeed, perhaps this is what T.E. Lawrence had in mind when he wrote that the art of guerrilla warfare with Arab tribes rests on setting up “ladders of tribes” to the objective.<sup>17</sup> Marine and Army units that have sought to understand tribal behavior in its own terms, to follow norms of proper behavior as expected by tribal communities, and to build their own confederations of local partners have done extremely well in this fight. Nevertheless, this uprising against extremism was the Iraqi people’s idea; they started it, they are leading it, and it is continuing on their timeline. The role of the U.S.-led coalition should be to support these initiatives when needed, ensure that proper political safeguards and human rights standards are in place, and recognize and be prepared for a number of unpredictable outcomes.

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*This article contains no material derived from detainee interrogation or other classified sources. All Iraqi informants gave their prior informed consent to the use and publication of their comments.*

17 T.E. Lawrence, “The Science of Guerrilla Warfare,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, XIVth Edition (1929).

## Islamic State of Iraq Commemorates its Two-Year Anniversary

By Pascale Combelles Siegel

IT HAS BEEN a difficult year for the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI). Created in October 2006 as al-Qa`ida in Iraq’s (AQI) emirate, the ISI was intended to be a precursor for the restoration of a Taliban-like caliphate over the Middle East. Since its inception, however, the ISI has been rebuffed by rival insurgent groups, battered by coalition operations and undermined by local Sunni tribes. Yet, during the end of September, the ISI’s leaders celebrated the state’s two-year anniversary. The celebration came well in advance of the actual anniversary, as the “state” was established on October 15, 2006. The ISI released Abu Hamza al-Muhajir’s “State of the Prophet” speech on September 19, while the al-Furqan Institute for Media Production released its commemorative video on September 22 and Abu `Umar al-Baghdadi’s “Promise to Allah” speech appeared on September 24. By releasing its messages well in advance of October 15, the ISI avoided the fate of al-Qa`ida’s delayed 9/11 celebration.<sup>1</sup> The ISI’s technical success, however, does not overshadow the challenges the group has faced in its two-year existence. The setbacks of the past year have made the glorification of the ISI a tough sell. To mitigate that difficulty, the ISI released a three-prong argument defending its legitimacy, celebrating its past accomplishments and vowing to achieve final victory.

### Defending the ISI’s Legitimacy

The transformation of AQI into an “emirate” proved a controversial move. As the ISI tried to coerce other rival groups into coming under its fold and as it imposed strict rules in the areas it controlled, discontent grew and it led to a serious reversal in the ISI’s fortunes. By spring 2007, pundits and rival insurgents made their disagreements public. Salafi-jihadi commentators argued that the state declaration did not meet jurisprudential criteria

1 On September 10, the first tier of al-Qa`ida’s websites went down for a full week, preventing al-Sahab from disseminating its 9/11 anniversary video in a timely and orderly fashion.

for establishing an emirate.<sup>2</sup> Rival insurgents appealed to Usama bin Ladin to rein in al-Qa`ida’s Iraqi franchise, and they openly fought AQI fighters on the ground.<sup>3</sup>

In the face of this unfavorable context, it was incumbent upon Abu Hamza al-Muhajir,<sup>4</sup> the ISI’s minister of war and AQI’s *amir*, to defend the Islamic state. In an hour-long speech, al-Muhajir chose to cast the difficulties aside and reframe the debate by focusing on the ISI’s legitimacy. His argument was clear: the ISI is “related to the concept of the state of the Prophet,”<sup>5</sup> referring to the time when the Prophet Muhammad established his rule in Medina after the migration of 622 AD. As part of this argument, since one should not question the legitimacy of Medina, then one should not question the legitimacy of the Islamic State of Iraq. Al-Muhajir argued that the situations in Medina and Iraq are comparable. As Medina was a battleground where a pious minority faced a larger, better-equipped enemy, so is Iraq. As Medina was plagued by disease, hunger and insecurity, so is Iraq.

Equalizing the circumstances in Medina and Iraq allows al-Muhajir to justify the ISI’s current tactics and policies. During the Prophet’s time, surveillance of others was necessary to ensure the Prophet’s safety, the Prophet and his companions carried weapons to defend themselves, looting helped weaken the Prophet’s enemies, and coercing community leaders into supporting the Prophet was justified. All of these circumstances, according to the ISI, apply today. This comparison serves three purposes. First, it is designed to end the controversy over the ISI’s legitimacy by appealing to what most Muslims consider sacred: the time of

2 “Prominent Islamist Kuwaiti Sheikh Questions Religious Legitimacy of the Islamic State of Iraq, Calls to Dissolve it,” Middle East Media Research Institute, April 27, 2007.

3 For a detailed description of the ISI’s rivalry with other insurgent groups, see Evan Kohlmann, “State of the Sunni Insurgency in Iraq: August 2007,” The NEFA Foundation, August 2007.

4 Abu Hamza al-Muhajir has been identified as an Egyptian known as Abu Ayyub al-Masri.

5 Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, “A Lecture Entitled: The State of the Prophet,” al-Furqan Institute for Media Production, September 19, 2008.

the Prophet Muhammad. Second, it allows al-Muhajir to promote the ISI as the embryo of great accomplishments to come, just as Medina was the precursor to a larger and more powerful Islamic state. Third, it helps al-Muhajir downplay the significance of the ISI's lost grounds and de-link the question

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of the ISI's eventual success from its tactical and operational successes. Although he acknowledged that the ISI lost territory during the past year, al-Muhajir argued that the modern statehood standard of territorial control is not the correct yardstick to measure either the ISI's legitimacy or strength. This argument is likely to please jihadists who commonly rail against the nation-states that have divided the Muslim umma. Yet, the argument goes in part against what the ISI boasted two years ago when it made a point to showcase the size of its geographical control.<sup>6</sup>

**Reframing the ISI's Achievements**

After addressing the issue of legitimacy, the ISI's al-Furqan media group released an hour-long video on September 22 showcasing the state's achievements. The video was a montage of previously released footage and speech excerpts. It contained graphic content (such as the extrajudicial executions of Iraqi security forces) but stayed away from the most gruesome clips that established the reputation of AQI under the leadership of Abu Mu`sab al-Zarqawi. Instead, the video touted the ISI's “achievements.” Some claims were expected, such as the assertions that the ISI has “exhausted

the occupation and its tails,”<sup>7</sup> helped shrink Iranian influence in Iraq, and protected “the Muslims who pray our way.”<sup>8</sup>

The video also vaunted the fact that the ISI has been able to restore Shari`a on “acts and individuals, committees and customs, regimes and everything.”<sup>9</sup> The video explained that the restoration of Shari`a was accomplished in an orderly fashion and implemented implacably. To support its claim, the video showed the sentencing and execution of people declared “apostates.” This framing will, no doubt, satisfy the Salafi-jihadis who feel that maintaining the purity of the faith is the most important duty for Muslims. It was, however, the ISI's (and before that AQI's) ruthless implementation of its extremely strict interpretation of Shari`a that helped turn locals and tribes against it. The ISI's draconian interpretation of Islam appeals only to a small minority of Muslims, its unwillingness to compromise makes it harder to find reliable partners, and the unflinching implementation of its principles generates hostility and opposition.

The video then analyzed the ISI's military achievements. Although the ISI routinely releases substantial accounts of “successful” attacks against coalition forces,<sup>10</sup> the commemorative video chose to ignore these fates and focused on the development of military technology. For example, with footage of men working on various devices and ammunitions as background, a caption indicated that an individual was

manufacturing rockets with chemical warheads. This part of the video was anti-climactic with a paltry staging that undercut the rather dramatic announcement. Nothing indicated that the device shown contained any chemicals. Unsurprisingly, the video also boasted that the ISI was developing a long-range missile capable of reaching Tel Aviv. The ISI has long claimed that it is an “advanced post to be the gate to the conquest of Jerusalem from the Jews.”<sup>11</sup> Advertising a new weapon capable of reaching Tel Aviv is designed to show supporters that the ISI is working to “liberate Jerusalem.”<sup>12</sup> The ISI and al-Qa`ida's leaders have repeatedly argued that Iraq is a “stepping stone” for the liberation of Jerusalem.

The most surprising claim made in the video regards the assassination of Shaykh Abdul Sattar Abu Risha, a founder of the Anbar Awakening Council, who was partially responsible for driving the ISI out of Anbar Province. The shaykh was killed on September 13, 2007 in a high-profile attack just a few days after publicly meeting with President George W. Bush. The video clip showed a man, with his face blurred, reading in front of a camera. The ISI claimed that he was the suicide bomber who killed Abu Risha. The claim is unverifiable, but the video spells a different account from the official version. At the time, the ISI did not release details of the operation citing operational security needs.<sup>13</sup> U.S. and Iraqi sources, however, reported that a roadside bomb, not a suicide bomber, killed Shaykh Abu Risha, and nothing to date has contradicted those reports. By portraying the attack as a suicide bombing, the ISI may be seeking to aggrandize its role and capabilities.

**Predicting Final Victory**

After justifying the legitimacy of the state and boasting of its achievements

6 “The Mujahideen Shura Council in Iraq: Announcing the Establishment of the State of Iraq,” al-Fajr Media Center, October 15, 2006.

7 To drive the point more convincingly, the video uses external “experts” to discuss the toll that the “resistance” has inflicted on U.S. forces. These experts do not necessarily distinguish between the various branches of the insurgency, yet it appears that they are specifically speaking about the ISI.

8 This is a veiled reference to the fact that the ISI intends to support those Sunnis who accept the basic tenets of its ideology (Salafism and jihadism). It can be construed from this euphemism that the ISI's protection extends to a small portion of the Sunni population.

9 “Remarkable Release: Two Years With the Islamic State,” al-Furqan Institute for Media Production, September 22, 2008.

10 For example, in mid-September 2008 the ISI released two summaries of military operations it claimed to have conducted in August 2008. In the two statements, the ISI took credit for conducting 755 military operations, for killing 1,701 “enemies” and for wounding 608 more.

11 “Remarkable Release: Two Years With the Islamic State.”

12 For more details on this issue, see Pascale Combelles Siegel, “Looking to the Levant: Internationalizing the Iraqi Insurgency,” *Terrorism Monitor* 6:5 (2008).

13 The original claim said: “Your brothers in the Ministry of Security [were able] to trace and assassinate... Abdul Setar Abu Rica...in a heroic operation which was prepared for more than one month.” See Islamic State of Iraq, “Eliminating the Grandson of Abu Regal, Abdul Setar Abu Rica,” al-Fajr Media Center, September 14, 2007.



and capabilities, the pinnacle of the celebration is a lengthy statement from ISI leader Abu `Umar al-Baghdadi making the case, once again, why jihad against the United States is absolutely necessary and a personal obligation that no self-respecting Muslim can skirt. Al-Baghdadi did not address any of the complex issues; instead, he gave a general “pep talk” designed to entice as many Muslims as possible to support the jihad. He did not discuss the crisis of legitimacy, the grounds lost to the coalition and to the Awakening Councils, or the controversial tactics that have turned many Iraqis against it; instead, al-Baghdadi refocused the debate on the necessity to undertake jihad against the Americans. His speech was general and inclusive. Al-Baghdadi defined the struggle in Iraq as a defensive jihad, whereby the United States is attacking Islam and the Muslim nation and imposing “injustice and tyranny.” In this context, al-Baghdadi argued that all able Muslims are obligated to undertake jihad to defend “religion and creed.” Quoting from the Qur’an, al-Baghdadi said: “Permission to fight is given to those who are fought against because they have been wronged.”<sup>14</sup>

As if to provide further incentive, al-Baghdadi emphasized the inevitability of the mujahidin’s success since their fight takes place under God’s auspices. With victory all but certain, al-Baghdadi offered all Muslims a chance to participate in the successful defense of Islam. To those who may doubt the final victory considering the current setbacks, al-Baghdadi offered reassurance. God, he said, works in mysterious ways and “fulfills His promise when He wants and according to His desires.”<sup>15</sup> How and when victory will come remains a mystery that man cannot pierce. The subtext of this claim is two-fold: it is not worth discussing the setbacks because only God can explain them, and no matter what the coalition and its allies try it will not have any bearing on the ultimate victory.

Al-Baghdadi closed his appeal by celebrating the mujahidin who have taken “the path to righteousness” and

by calling on all Muslims who have strayed to come back to the path of jihad or face dire consequences. “If you refuse to repent before defeat over you,” he warned, “then by Allah the killing of an apostate is dearer to me than 100 heads of Crusaders.”<sup>16</sup>

#### Conclusion

Contrary to al-Qa`ida, the Islamic State of Iraq managed the technical release of its commemorative speeches and videos without glitches. Nevertheless, the technical success cannot overshadow the fact that the setbacks of the past year have made glorifying the “state” a tough sell. The commemoration messages highlight some of these difficulties, forcing the ISI into a defensive position. The fallback line of defense serves two purposes: first, it unsurprisingly uses the Prophet and his era to justify the ISI’s current actions; second, it tries to refocus the debate on the need for every Muslim to engage in what is a justified defensive jihad. There is no doubt that the ISI’s celebration is overshadowed by its current difficulties, but it does not mean that its appeal will go unanswered.

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## British Muslims Providing Foot Soldiers for the Global Jihad

By James Brandon

THE UNITED KINGDOM faces a number of terrorist threats. It is often portrayed as a target for jihadist groups worldwide; a “factory” for producing homegrown terrorists seeking to attack the country in which they were born and raised; and a haven for Middle Eastern Islamist ideologues and militants. Although these depictions are accurate, they have eclipsed the extent to which British Muslims are also playing an important role in jihadist violence globally by providing funding, foot soldiers and technical expertise to jihadist groups. In recent years, British jihadists have been recorded fighting not only in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in Chechnya, Israel and Somalia. British jihadists involved in these conflicts have been of all ages and backgrounds; some have been experienced fighters, while others traveled to war zones with no military training or obvious involvement in radical activities. This article will look at the involvement of British Muslims in Iraq, Afghanistan and other conflicts such as Somalia.

#### Iraq

Since 2003, many prominent British Islamist leaders have supported jihadist attacks against foreign troops in Iraq. Their endorsements of the Iraqi resistance, joined by similar exhortations from more radical preachers and jihadist websites, have led to a stream of British Muslims traveling to Iraq to carry out attacks on coalition troops. By mid-2005 alone, the British security services estimated that around 70 British Muslims had gone to Iraq to fight for al-Qa`ida and other jihadist organizations.<sup>1</sup>

These volunteers have come from all backgrounds. In November 2003, for example, Wail al-Dhaleai, a 22-year-old British Yemeni, died while carrying out a suicide attack on U.S. troops in Iraq.<sup>2</sup> Al-Dhaleai had arrived in

14 Abu `Umar al-Baghdadi, “The Promise of Allah,” al-Furqan Institute for Media Production, September 24, 2008.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

1 David Leppard and Hala Jaber, “70 British Muslims Join Iraq fighters,” *The Times*, June 26, 2005.

2 Nick Pelham, “British Olympic Hope ‘Was Iraq Suicide Bomber,’” *Guardian*, November 16, 2003.



the United Kingdom only a few years earlier from Aden, Yemen, settling in Sheffield where he had quickly become involved with Salafist groups, marrying a white British convert to Islam who similarly followed an extreme brand of the religion. Al-Dhaleai went to Iraq indirectly, traveling from the United Kingdom to the United Arab Emirates and then heading to Syria from where he entered Iraq. His father, who lives in Yemen, was informed of his son's death by a militant in Iraq who phoned him with the news. Al-Dhaleai, a recent immigrant to the United Kingdom, is not necessarily typical of UK-based jihadists who traveled to Iraq. For example, Mobeen Muneef, a 25-year-old Muslim of Pakistani origin who was raised in South London, is another young British jihadist who joined Iraqi insurgents before being captured by U.S. Marines in Ramadi in December 2004.<sup>3</sup> Muneef was reported to have been involved with the British al-Muhajiroun group while in London and to have entered Iraq from Syria where he had been studying Arabic. In 2006, he was jailed for 15 years by an Iraqi court for possessing a fake Iraqi ID.<sup>4</sup> Other UK-based jihadists active in Iraq have been experienced mujahidin. In February 2005, for example, Idris Bazis, a 41-year-old French-Algerian living in Manchester, died in a suicide attack on U.S. troops in Iraq.<sup>5</sup> Bazis had previously fought in the Balkans and Afghanistan in the 1990s, settling in the United Kingdom only in 2004.

Not all British jihadists active in Iraq are Sunni. Some British Shi'a Muslims have also taken part in the violence. For example, in August 2004 a reporter from the *Guardian* interviewed two British men who had joined Muqtada al-Sadr's Jaysh al-Mahdi in Najaf.<sup>6</sup> Both men, then in their early 20s, had been born in Iraq but moved to the United Kingdom as children, before returning to Iraq specifically to join al-Sadr's forces and fight U.S. troops. They said they had

received rudimentary conventional military training from Jaysh al-Mahdi before being deployed in Najaf. Their present whereabouts are unknown.

Many of the British jihadists known to have fought in Iraq are of Arab descent. This points to an important wider trend of British jihadists generally heading to parts of the world where they will be most likely to speak the language and to blend in with locals. For example, most British jihadists of Pakistani origin have

**“It would make sense for Afghan fighters to delegate communication responsibilities to comparatively well-educated British jihadists.”**

gone to Afghanistan and Pakistan while those of Arab origin have tended to go to Iraq. Moreover, given the difficulties that even experienced foreign jihadists have had in operating in Iraq's politically fragmented and internally divided society, it is unsurprising that some British jihadists seem to have decided that rather than traveling to Iraq to carry out attacks, it is easier to simply attack British soldiers in the United Kingdom itself. In December 2005, Abu Baker Mansha, a 21-year-old of Pakistani origin, was jailed for planning to attack a British soldier living in the United Kingdom who had been recently decorated for bravery in Iraq.<sup>7</sup> Separately, in February 2008, five British Muslims from Birmingham (mostly of Pakistani origin) were convicted of planning to kidnap and behead a local British Muslim soldier in an attempt to dissuade other Muslims from joining the British army.<sup>8</sup>

**Afghanistan**

During the past year, there have been increased reports in the UK media of British Muslims fighting with the Taliban and al-Qa`ida in Afghanistan.

In August 2008, Brigadier Ed Butler, who recently commanded British forces in Afghanistan, told the *Daily Telegraph* that it was “likely” that British Muslims were fighting alongside the Taliban, saying, “there are British passport holders who live in the UK who are being found in places like Kandahar.”<sup>9</sup> Earlier in the year, several newspapers had reported that Royal Air Force spy planes in Afghanistan had picked up Taliban radio conversations conducted in English regional accents. In April 2008, the British security services estimated that 4,000 British Muslims had visited training camps in Afghanistan.<sup>10</sup>

British militants have been involved in Afghanistan since at least the early 1990s when substantial numbers of British Muslims attended training camps in Taliban-ruled areas. Following the U.S. invasion in 2001, small groups of British Muslims affiliated with British extremist groups traveled to Afghanistan to join al-Qa`ida and the Taliban. At least five were reportedly killed soon afterwards.<sup>11</sup> Since then, however, there is surprisingly little hard evidence of British Muslims actively fighting in Afghanistan. It does not appear that jihadist websites have reported the deaths of any British jihadists in Afghanistan and neither Western armies nor the Afghan security forces have reported capturing or killing any British fighters there. This is despite widespread evidence of radical preachers in the United Kingdom encouraging Muslims to fight in Afghanistan as well as numerous cases of British Muslims being put on trial for heading to Afghanistan and Pakistan to receive military training. One possible reason for this apparent discrepancy is that, as in Iraq, jihadist groups have decided that British volunteers, however enthusiastic, are of limited use on the front lines. Instead, they seem to have recognized that such volunteers are more useful in either returning to the United Kingdom to conduct attacks there, or to raise funds and buy hi-

3 Paul Lewis, “15 Years for Briton Convicted in Iraq,” *Guardian*, April 21, 2006.

4 Daniel McGrory, “Briton is Jailed for 15 Years in Iraq as a Warning to Foreign Insurgents,” *The Times*, April 20, 2006.

5 Daniel McGrory and Michael Evans, “The Deadly Trail of a Mystery Bomber,” *The Times*, June 23, 2005.

6 Rory McCarthy, “From London to Iraq - The Latest Recruits to the Mahdi Army,” *Guardian*, August 11, 2004.

7 “Man Convicted Under Terrorism Act,” BBC, December 22, 2005.

8 “Five Men Sentenced Over Terrorism Offences Connected to the Birmingham Beheading Plot,” Crown Prosecution Service, February 18, 2008.

9 Con Coughlin, “British Muslims ‘Fighting with the Taliban in Afghanistan,’” *Daily Telegraph*, August 2, 2008.

10 Ben Leapman, “4,000 in UK Trained at Terror Camps,” *Sunday Telegraph*, April 19, 2008.

11 Paul Harris, Martin Bright and Burhan Wazir, “Five Britons Killed in ‘Jihad Brigade,’” *Observer*, October 29, 2001.

tech equipment for fighters already in Afghanistan. One recent example of this trend is Sohail Anjum Qureshi, a Muslim of Pakistani origin from East London, who was jailed in early 2008 for trying to board a flight to Pakistan with £9,000 in cash, sleeping bags, night-vision equipment and combat manuals downloaded from the internet, which police believe were destined for militant groups in Afghanistan or Pakistan.<sup>12</sup> Although Qureshi told friends in the United Kingdom that he was going abroad to carry out a “14-20 day operation” in which he hoped to “kill many,” it seems more likely that the foreign militants regarded him as little more than a useful source of cash, hi-tech equipment and Western knowledge.<sup>13</sup> Similar decisions by experienced militants may also explain the recent reports of British Muslims being heard communicating on Taliban radio. It would make sense for Afghan fighters to delegate communication responsibilities to comparatively well-educated British jihadists—rather than entrusting them with front line combat duties where their lack of military training could endanger not only their own lives but also those of others.

#### Other Conflicts

As well as becoming involved with militants in Iraq and Afghanistan, British Muslims have also been involved in other jihadist conflicts around the world. The most famous incident occurred when two British Muslims attempted to carry out a suicide attack in a bar in Tel Aviv in May 2003. Only one man’s bomb detonated successfully, killing three people, while the other’s malfunctioned, forcing him to flee the scene.<sup>14</sup> Other UK-based militants have also reportedly been active in Chechnya. For example, in 2004 Osman Larussi and Yacine Benalia, two Algerians based in London, took part in the Beslan school siege and were later killed.<sup>15</sup> A third British-Algerian, Kamel Rabat Bouralha, who had also been involved in the siege, was later captured by Russian security forces. All three men attended Abu Hamza’s mosque in Finsbury Park,

a hub for British radicals in the early 1990s and early 2000s.

It also seems likely that some members of Britain’s nearly 80,000-strong Somali community have been involved with the Islamic Courts Union, Somalia’s largest jihadist group. In January 2007, for example, Ethiopia reported that seven British citizens were wounded in a

**“All the evidence suggests that the United Kingdom is presently producing more jihadists than many Muslim-majority states such as Malaysia, Nigeria or Oman.”**

U.S. airstrike in southern Somalia and were later captured near the Kenyan border.<sup>16</sup> The previous month Ethiopia claimed to have captured three other British passport holders. The British government has not publicly confirmed these reports and the men’s present whereabouts are unknown. In the United Kingdom itself, prominent British Muslim groups have helped the Islamic Courts Union to raise funds and rally support for their cause. For example, in late 2006 the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), the UK’s largest Muslim Brotherhood-linked group, hosted senior leaders of the Islamic Courts in London’s Finsbury Park Mosque (run by the MAB since the arrest of Abu Hamza), while the delegation also held a fundraising meeting at a nearby school.<sup>17</sup>

#### Conclusion

Muslims from other European countries have also carried out jihadist attacks abroad. At least two Belgian Muslims (including a woman convert) are believed to have died while carrying out attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq.<sup>18</sup> Somalis living in Scandinavia have

fought in Somalia with the Islamic Courts Union.<sup>19</sup> In France, five Muslims were put on trial in March 2008 for sending French Muslims to fight in Iraq,<sup>20</sup> while numerous other French Muslims are believed to have taken part in attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>21</sup> In Germany, police arrested two German-Somalis in September 2008 as they were preparing to fly to Pakistan where they were believed to be planning to attend militant training camps.<sup>22</sup> *Der Spiegel* has reported that the German security services believe that “over the past few years 50 extremists have slipped out of Germany with the aim of going into hiding in the Afghan-Pakistani border region and learning the trade at terrorist training camps.”<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, it seems clear that these figures are dwarfed by the number of British jihadists heading not only to Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, but to other conflict zones such as Chechnya and Somalia. All the evidence suggests that the United Kingdom is presently producing more jihadists than many Muslim-majority states such as Malaysia, Nigeria or Oman and indeed perhaps even more than countries traditionally thought of as “exporting” terrorism such as Lebanon, Somalia or Sudan. This trend starkly indicates how the United Kingdom’s failure to adequately counter the flow of homegrown jihadists—or to reverse decades of failed government integration policies—presents serious security challenges not only for the United Kingdom, but also for its allies around the world.

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12 “Man Jailed Over Terrorism Charges,” BBC, January 8, 2008.

13 “Terrorist and the Shop Girl,” BBC, January 8, 2008.

14 “Suicide Bomber ‘Was British,’” BBC, May 1, 2003.

15 Jason Burke, “London Mosque Link to Beslan,” *Guardian*, October 3, 2004.

16 Julian Borger and Xan Rice, “UK Tries to Identify British Fighters Injured in Somalia,” *Guardian*, January 11, 2007.

17 Jeevan Vasagar, “Somali Islamists Held UK Meeting to Raise Funds,” *Guardian*, January 13, 2007.

18 Anouar Boukhars, “Iraqi Terror Trial Exposes Belgium’s Muslim Dilemma,” *Terrorism Focus* 4:35 (2007).

19 “Swedes Reported Dead in Somalia,” *The Local*, January 30, 2007.

20 Angela Charlton, “French Extremists Dream of Jihad in Iraq,” Associated Press, March 31, 2008.

21 See, for example, “France Tries Militant Islamist Network,” Agence France-Presse, October 1, 2008.

22 “From the Rhine River to the Jihad,” *Der Spiegel*, September 29, 2008.

23 Ibid.

## Anatomy of Spain's 28 Disrupted Jihadist Networks

By Javier Jordan

SINCE THE MARCH 11, 2004 terrorist attacks in Madrid, Spanish security forces have carried out 28 operations against jihadist networks. The amount of jihadist activity in Spain demonstrates how it has become a structural phenomenon and poses a threat to Spanish and European security. This article analyzes the main characteristics of the 28 foiled networks: their origin, functions and potential links to wider terrorist organizations. It finds that the majority of those involved in Spanish terrorist plots are of Algerian and Moroccan descent, their primary role is logistics work, and the majority of cells have been linked to wider terrorist organizations.

### Primarily Maghrebian Origins

The first discernible fact is that 70% of those arrested come from Algeria and Morocco.<sup>1</sup> This is not surprising because the majority of Muslim immigrants in Spain are Moroccans, followed by Algerians. The overwhelming tendency of jihadist networks in Spain to be composed of Moroccans and Algerians is unlikely to change in the future. The third predominant nationality is Pakistani. Twenty-three Pakistanis have been arrested since 2004. Most of them belonged to two cells that presumably were preparing terrorist attacks in Barcelona (one in September 2004 and another in January 2008). The Pakistani community in Spain is not very open, and security forces find it particularly difficult to infiltrate it or obtain cooperation from its members. Pakistani residents in Spain also travel frequently to their home country.<sup>2</sup>

Spaniards represent the fourth most prominent nationality among those arrested in the 28 counter-terrorist operations since the Madrid bombings.

Although 14 of the 19 Spaniards arrested were born in the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla, their parents were of Moroccan origin and they were raised as Muslims. Only five are Spanish converts to Islam.

### Logistics Functions and Preparations for New Attacks in Spain

Most Spanish police operations have focused on networks that performed logistics tasks. Logistics work is the main task of cells that have settled in Spain since the beginning of the 1990s. In recent years, this work has included the recruitment and sending of volunteers to fight in Iraq. This role corresponds to eight networks uncovered by Spanish security services. There are also the cases of three cells that were apprehended in 2007 for sending volunteers to Algeria with the intention of later entering Iraq. Unfortunately, there is no concrete data available on the exact number of individuals recruited and sent from Spain. Some specific cases are known, such as the Algerian Belgacem Bellil, originally recruited by a network in Catalonia; he later became involved in an attack against an Italian Carabinieri command in Nasiriyah, Iraq in November 2003. Overall, however, a remarkable lack of information exists on this issue.

In addition to recruitment and sending fighters to theaters of jihad, other logistics tasks include providing false documentation or money to established jihadist groups. Spanish security forces arrested five of these cells, and they were tied to the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC)—now known as al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). In all five cells, financing was managed via the fraudulent use of credit cards, domestic burglaries or selling counterfeit clothing. There is also one case that escapes common parameters involving a GSPC cell that invested in a prostitution house in Malaga with the intention of passing on funds on a long-term basis to Algeria.

After the Madrid bombings, the number of groups that have tried to commit attacks in Spain has increased. Certainty of at least seven terrorist plans of this type exists. Fortunately, most of these plans were foiled in the early phases of preparation. In addition to these seven plots, there were also two cases of

suspicious activity undertaken in 2004 by individuals with links to jihadist groups: the video recording of important buildings in Barcelona by members of a Pakistani cell, and the detention of two Moroccans in possession of a camera near a nuclear power station in Guadalajara near Madrid. Almost all of these plans involved attacks on various civilian targets with the intention to cause mass indiscriminate death. Of all the Spanish cities, Madrid and Barcelona were the most frequently listed targets. This again demonstrates the interest to carry out attacks in cities that guarantee the attention of the global media. The information available suggests that beyond the typical rationale of a struggle against infidels, the plans were driven by a desire for revenge in response to Spanish counter-terrorist activities and the presence of Spanish troops in Afghanistan. In four cases, the terrorists sought to acquire explosives by buying them from criminals (such as in the Madrid bombings), and in three cases they supposedly sought to use homemade explosives.

### Subordination to Regional Organizations

A third important aspect regarding jihadist militancy in Spain is that most of the cells were linked to wider organizations, mainly the GSPC/AQIM. There have also been cases of autonomous grassroots jihadist networks, but their numbers are significantly lower. One individual even operated alone, on a supposedly "lone wolf" basis. These three types of cells—subordinates to wider organizations, grassroots networks and "lone wolf" operatives—will be explored in this section.

Of the 28 cells analyzed, 22 form part of wider organizations. Overall, two main criteria needed to be fulfilled to consider a cell as part of a wider organization: communication and coordinated action. The cell would need to maintain regular contact with other members of the superior organization and carry out coordinated efforts with other cells of the group.<sup>3</sup> Figure 1 shows

<sup>1</sup> This fact, along with most of the information in this report, is based on the author's study of the 28 Spanish counter-terrorist operations that have occurred since the 2004 Madrid attacks.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, many are currently petitioning for direct flights between Barcelona and Pakistan—at present, they use indirect flights via the United Kingdom.

<sup>3</sup> Examples of communication and coordinated action include recruiting and placing volunteers, transferring money and shipping false documents, and preparing attacks following the directives of a superior organization. These criteria are thus merely functional, not formal. For example, it is not required as formal criteria that the cell



the organizations to which the cells belonged. In at least three of the cases, cells simultaneously communicated and coordinated their activities with their original organization (the GSPC or the GICM) and with al-Qa`ida in Iraq. For this reason, they have been noted twice in the data as linked to those organizations.

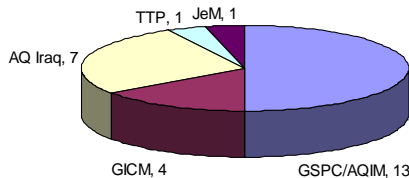


Figure 1. Organizations to which failed terrorist networks in Spain belong.

Five of the 28 cells were grassroots jihadist networks. This is defined as groups of militants who act completely autonomously, without subordination or coordination to a superior group, although they could possibly be in contact with members of other networks or organizations. It is possible that some of these cells were in fact dependent on a superior organization; however, based on the current open source data, that is impossible to verify.

Cross sectioning the data above provides interesting results regarding cell categories and functions. Of the 22 local cells that coordinated with a superior organization, only three cells were preparing attacks in Spain (two of them performed both logistical and preparatory tasks). Of the five grassroots jihadist networks, however, four cells focused on the preparation of attacks in Spain and the fifth cell was committed to the development and distribution of propaganda via the internet. Although not part of this study, the network that executed the 2004 attacks in Madrid also corresponds, given the available information, to the category of a grassroots jihadist network.<sup>4</sup>

leader pledge an oath of loyalty to the *amir* of the superior organization or that the other cell members, except the leader, consider themselves as members of the wider organization.

4 Javier Jordán, Fernando M. Mañas and Nicola Horsburgh, "Strengths and Weaknesses of Grassroots Jihadist Networks: The Madrid Bombings," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 31:1 (2008): pp. 17-39.

All of the grassroots jihadist networks that prepared attacks in Spain lacked professionalism and were too open to their social surroundings, making them vulnerable to authorities. The terrorist plot that came closest to success was to be executed by a cell tied to a wider organization. That plan involved a series of attacks on the Barcelona metro from a cell composed of trained Pakistanis under the subordination of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The cell and its plan were detected and uncovered by an undercover agent from the French intelligence services who had infiltrated it. The cell possessed enough knowledge to build homemade explosives, had already selected six suicide bomber candidates and chose the targets to attack. After the attacks, Baitullah Mehsud, the leader of the TTP, planned to release a statement demanding the withdrawal of European troops from Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup>

Among the 28 cases examined, there is one that falls into the category of a "lone wolf." In September 2007, the Mossos d'Esquadra (Catalonian Police) arrested a French individual of Moroccan origin in Girona, traveling by car from Toulouse in France. He had in his car two gas canisters, firecrackers, a leaflet of the Islamic Army in Iraq that praised acts of martyrdom and, most surprisingly, a Ninja sword situated behind the driver's seat. The presence of the sword in the back seat, aimed at his body, is perhaps proof of his suicide intentions. The individual was possibly inspired by the attack in June 2007 that took place in Glasgow when two individuals crashed a car into the city airport. Perhaps to avoid being burnt to death, the sword was placed behind the driver so as to kill him rapidly upon impact.

### Conclusion

The presence of jihadist networks in Spain has become a structural phenomenon. The majority of cells consisted of individuals from Algeria and Morocco, and many were linked to the GSPC/AQIM. The 28 police operations conducted following the attacks in Madrid demonstrate the pressure that Spanish security forces

5 Antonio Baquero and Jordi Corachán, "Los 14 detenidos en BCN planeaban atentados en España y en Francia," *El Periódico de Catalunya*, January 20, 2008.

exert over jihadist cells, but also the degree of implantation of jihadist elements on Spanish soil.

Although the Islamic community in Spain has generally displayed a firm rejection of the Madrid terrorist attacks, in the long-term jihadists could benefit from the wide diffusion of non-violent Islamist movements within Spain's Muslim immigrant community. Some of these groups indirectly pose the question of how best to integrate Muslim immigrants into Spanish society, and in exceptional cases these groups may even act as a step toward radical socialization. In Spain, groups of concern include the Moroccan movement al-`adl wa'l-`adl Ihsan (Justice and Spirituality), numerous Salafist Wahhabist preachers who control nearly 30 oratories (of the more than 200 mosques and oratories) in Catalonia, Tablighi Jama`at and, to a lesser extent, Hizb al-Tahrir. Additionally, the radicalization of Muslim inmates in Spanish prisons must also be considered, with serious problems in the control of visits, dissemination of books and religious preaching inside the penitentiary facilities.<sup>6</sup>

This evidence guarantees that dozens of militants will arise in the future. Fortunately, almost all of the attempts to target Spain after the Madrid attacks in 2004 have been carried out by networks that are mostly unprofessional and vulnerable. Yet, the risk of new attacks on Spanish soil remains high. Some of the grassroots networks might achieve success in the future, such as the group that executed the Madrid attacks. The degree of threat would also rise if AQIM actually modifies its strategy<sup>7</sup> and instructs its logistics cells to attack targets in Spain and France.

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6 José Antonio Gutiérrez, Javier Jordán and Humberto Trujillo, "Prevention of Jihadist Radicalization in Spanish Prisons. Current Situation, Challenges and Dysfunctions of the Penitentiary System," *Athena Intelligence Journal* 3:1 (2008): pp. 7-16.

7 Although AQIM has issued incendiary statements toward France and Spain, it does not appear to have changed its targeting strategy to Europe.



## The Impact of Global Youth Bulges on Islamist Radicalization and Violence

By Colleen McCue and Kathryn Haahr

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS AND trends in violent radicalization, domestic recruitment and homegrown terrorism present growing challenges to U.S. and foreign local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. Blending what is known from youth violence research in the United States with what has been projected foretells a rough scenario: a large number of “super predators” with a radicalized ideology and agenda. The implications of this scenario for combating terrorism are significant. The National Intelligence Council’s 2020 Project (NIC 2020)<sup>1</sup> report notes pending “youth bulges” in many Arab states as contributing to a “perfect storm” for conflict in certain regions, specifically stating that “most of the regions that will experience gains in religious ‘activists’ also have youth bulges, which experts have correlated with high numbers of radical adherents, including Muslim extremists.” Given what the local, state and federal law enforcement community understands about changes in the nature and severity of youth violence, the “youth bulge” predicted by the NIC 2020 and the relationship with radical Islam is concerning, especially since it will affect Muslim diaspora communities in areas such as Western Europe. The European radicalization experience is relevant to U.S. law enforcement analysts and operators because individuals in both the United States and Europe are radicalizing due to the same global factors, albeit not to the same degrees.

### Violent Radicalization and Youth Violence in the United States

The anticipated increase in the number of young radicals in many Arab states may represent only part of the challenge associated with this type of anticipated demographic group. Previous research on youth violence in the United States provides additional insight regarding the true challenge embodied in the

NIC’s prediction, as well as insight and guidance about possible approaches to addressing recruitment, radicalization, homegrown terrorism, and the predicted “youth bulge” of radical Islamists. Approximately a decade ago, Dr. James Fox predicted a pending increase in youth violence in the United States based on a similar demographic “bulge.”<sup>2</sup> Similar to the NIC 2020 estimate, Dr. Fox predicted that growing numbers of young people in their “crime prone” years were expected to account for an increased prevalence of youth violence in the United States. While it is unclear whether these predictions were entirely accurate, there is little doubt that the nature and severity of youth crime changed, often dramatically, during that period. Examination of the crimes perpetrated by this demographic revealed a level of violence, brutality and remorselessness that prompted some to refer to this particular demographic group as “super predators.”<sup>3</sup> In particular, direct exposure to urban violence presented multiple opportunities for social learning and modeling. This was especially true with drug-related violence given the propensity to perpetrate public, extremely brutal or degrading violence as a means by which to control behavior and enforce the rules and norms associated with illegal drug markets.<sup>4</sup> Related to the perception of a diminished life expectancy is an increased prevalence of adolescent parenting that further compounds the problem.<sup>5</sup>

These findings on violent radicalization and youth violence in the United States cause even greater concern regarding the “youth bulge” described in the NIC 2020 report precisely because this particular cohort will come of age roughly 20

years from the initiation of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, effectively paralleling the constellation of social and environmental factors correlated with the emergence of “super predators” in the United States. Not only will there be more young people in Arab states, but they may be qualitatively worse given their exposure to conflict and violence during critical phases of emotional and moral development. While the nature, severity, frequency and proximity to violence are significant, the impact of the community response and attitudes toward violence cannot be understated. In many ways, while the direct exposure to violence might be significant, direct exposure to violence within the context of community apathy, tolerance, support or even glamorization may profoundly alter development. A review of youth violence trends in the United States and the demographic group described by the NIC 2020 report has revealed two specific parallels: community response to violence, and the normalization and glamorization of violence.<sup>6</sup>

### The Community Response to Violence

Field-based research on behavior at crime scenes in the United States has revealed that some community violence is perceived as being not only acceptable, but even appropriate or helpful if the victim is known to be involved in illegal or otherwise undesirable behavior. Similarly, sectarian violence has represented a unique challenge in post-conflict communities given the tension between violence perpetrated against victims perceived as being “less than innocent”—including those involved in former repressive regimes or insurgent groups—and the need to enforce the rule of law. The increased prevalence of street justice and the erosion, or even outright absence of the rule of law in post-conflict communities are expected to have profound implications for young people given what is known about how children learn appropriate moral and ethical behavior. Experience in the United States underscores the fact that each violent act that is endorsed or even permitted effectively erodes the ability of the “legal” enforcement elements to uphold the rule of law and protect the

<sup>1</sup> “Mapping the Global Future,” Report of the National Intelligence Council’s 2020 Project, December 2004.

<sup>2</sup> James Fox, *Trends in Juvenile Violence: A Report to the United States Attorney General on Current and Future Rates of Juvenile Offending* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> William Bennett, John Dilulio and John Walters, *Body Count* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), pp. 21-34.

<sup>4</sup> “Homicide,” in John Douglas et al., *Crime Classification Manual* (New York: Lexington Books, 1992), pp. 17-161; Paul Goldstein, “The Drugs/Violence Nexus: A Tripartite Conceptual Framework,” *Journal of Drug Issues* 15 (1985): pp. 493-506.

<sup>5</sup> Colleen McLaughlin, Scott Reiner, Patricia Reams and Timothy Joost, “Intentional Injury and Adolescent Parenting Among Incarcerated Juvenile Offenders,” *Adolescence* 34 (1999): pp. 665-70.

<sup>6</sup> Jerry Oliver and Colleen McLaughlin, “Focusing on the Other Side of the Crime Scene Tape: What Happens When ‘Normal’ is the Problem?” *The Police Chief* 65:11 (1998): pp. 50-53.

community, regardless of the victim's status, perceived innocence or role in the conflict. Developmental research underscores the fact that children look to the adults in their lives as models for what is appropriate and ethical behavior; approval from significant people in a child's life, particularly parents and other adults in the community, is critical to developing an understanding of and appreciation for what is right and what is wrong.<sup>7</sup>

As the tension between the "legal" and "illegal" enforcement elements becomes blurred, the decision to support the rule of law becomes increasingly difficult. Perhaps one of the more graphic displays of public acceptance and even endorsement of violence involved the American contractors killed, mutilated and publicly displayed in Falluja, Iraq.<sup>8</sup> Like the brutal violence and post-mortem mutilation associated with some drug-related homicides,<sup>9</sup> the overt public nature and "messaging" associated with the brutality of these incidents cannot be overstated. Over time, this failure can result in passive acceptance of ongoing violence and conflict, and significantly diminish the ability of a community to enforce social norms and prohibitions against violence, including the rule of law.

#### **Normalization and Glamorization of Violence**

One of the most challenging problems relates to the normalization and even glamorization of violence. A significant challenge to law enforcement and health care professionals alike, the normalization, expectation and glamorization of violence significantly erodes the social norms supporting social order and the rule of law, and compromises the ability to effectively reduce violent crime. Similarly, reports of celebrations and praise for violent attacks in radicalized segments have emerged, further supporting the glamorization of involvement in violence

as both victim and perpetrator. Photos have circulated of small children posing as suicide bombers, wearing tiny yet realistic bomb vests. Whether real or staged, the implications of these images and their potential impact on the youth in those communities are staggering.

**"Not only will there be more young people in Arab states, but they may be qualitatively worse given their exposure to conflict and violence during critical phases of emotional and moral development."**

Monetary awards and support provided to the families of suicide bombers and other martyrs serves to reinforce the value and even glamor of this behavior. Again, if moral development includes the acquisition of behaviors and judgments relating to the value of human life, social responsibility, and the ethics of harming others,<sup>10</sup> then poor behavior promoted and modeled by adults threatens to profoundly stunt the moral growth and development of the children watching and learning. Ultimately, the view of violence as normal, expected or even glamorous threatens to erode the social norms and values regarding the value of human life, and diminish a child's perception of his or her own value to the larger community.<sup>11</sup>

#### **The Diaspora: The International Experience**

The NIC report also references the increasing Muslim diaspora, noting that "the spread of radical Islam will have a significant global impact leading to 2020, rallying disparate ethnic and national groups and perhaps even creating an authority that transcends national boundaries." Other countries have already experienced the consequences of local radicalization, recruitment and homegrown terrorism, particularly among youth. Muslim émigrés from North Africa planned

and carried out the 2004 Madrid train station bombings,<sup>12</sup> and predominantly South Asian émigrés (mostly Pakistani) committed the 2005 and 2007 terrorist operations in the United Kingdom. European radicalization networks are similar to those in the United States in that Islamist recruiters leverage "violence networks"—prisons, criminal and gang cells, mosques and the internet—to recruit predominantly young, male Muslims for activities in support of terrorist operations.<sup>13</sup> What was once local violence has transformed into global violence—Usama bin Ladin's strategic agenda to mobilize local actors to violently carry out global missions, usually against the "far enemy." Previously contained Islamist communities in Algeria and Morocco, for example, are now represented in various European countries via a violent diaspora micro-community within the larger diaspora community.

The path from delinquent and criminal activity, often coupled with violence, sets the socio-cultural stage for the radicalization process: at some point, the individual makes a rational decision to move beyond local violent behavior into a space that condones physical violence against unknown and unfamiliar targets. In Spain, for example, most of the radicalized Spanish Muslims are predominantly young, first generation adult males who have been involved in some type of delinquent crime, not always involving violence. There is scant information, however, as to their involvement in violent activity in their home countries prior to coming to Spain. In the Netherlands, the murder of Theo van Gogh involved young Muslims who seemed to be well-integrated into their societies prior to their involvement in violent activity. In Europe, the diaspora Muslims, almost always young males,

7 Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Development of Moral Character and Moral Ideology* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964).

8 Cited as an expression of anti-American sentiment, the assembled crowd cheered and dragged the bodies through the street, finally suspending them from a bridge. Jeffrey Gettleman, "Enraged Mob in Falluja Kills 4 American Contractors," *New York Times*, March 31, 2004.

9 Douglas et al., "Homicide."

10 Guy Lefrancois, *Of Children: An Introduction to Child Development* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1989).

11 Oliver and McLaughlin, "Focusing on the Other Side of the Crime Scene Tape."

12 Kathryn Haahr, "Assessing Spain's al-Qaeda Network," *Terrorism Monitor* 3:13 (2005).

13 "Prison Radicalization: Are Terrorist Cells Forming in US Cell Blocks?" testimony of Frank J. Cilluffo, director of the Homeland Security Policy Institute, George Washington University, September 19, 2006; Alain Bauer, "La Experiencia Francesa ante el Terrorismo Internacional," Real Instituto Elcano, October 3, 2007; Jose Antonio Gutierrez, Javier Jordan and Humberto Trujillo, "Prevencion de la Radicalizacion yihadista en las prisiones espanolas. Situacion actual, retos y disfunciones del sistema penitenciario," *Athena Intelligence Journal* 3:1 (2008).

have experienced violence either directly through a family involved in Islamist activity (who grew up in Algeria and Morocco) or indirectly (are second or third generation immigrants living in Europe) through family members who directly experienced violent uprisings against a European or national power. For those individuals who indirectly experienced violence, the impact of ethnic and religious violence formed part of their political and social landscape. These diaspora Muslims are quietly radicalizing by embracing violence as a way to act on their transnational grievances.

Most of the recruits to jihadist operations in Europe seem to be driven by two motivations: professional (to serve the global jihad), and spiritual and personal (a belief in martyrdom). What is clear is that the majority of recruits upheld an extreme religiosity. What is not clear is what kind of Muslim becomes a target for jihadist recruiters, although the majority of recruits have come into contact with the recruiters in shared religious and social networks. Available information indicates that jihadist recruiters have been successful in exploiting cultural variables in distinct micro-diaspora communities to recruit Muslims in support of operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Spain, North Africa and elsewhere in Europe.<sup>14</sup> There are several contributing factors to an increased attraction to radical Islamism among European micro-diaspora communities: the importation of Salafist Islamist ideologies via virtual and physical social networks (which includes the powerful influence of foreign and some local imams); the allure of defending the plight of the global umma, a sentiment that motivates many young, mostly male Muslims to engage in political-religious activism in their European home country; and the religio-political national identity phenomenon of demographic Islamism. Radical Islamist political activism occurs in three overlapping areas: criminal activities knowingly or unknowingly in support of jihadist terrorism planning operations; proselytization and other religious activities knowingly or unknowingly supporting jihadist terrorism planning operations; and active participation

in terrorist activities. For most of the radicalizing male Muslims, their social/ethnic/cultural/political personas are fused with their religious views—this nexus predisposes some Muslims to engage in violence, be it petty crime in support of financing radical Islamist propaganda, proselytizing, or actual planning to commit a terrorist attack.

### Conclusion

The profound impact of community violence on development cannot be understated. Earlier challenges associated with the cohort that was born during the crack cocaine “war” in the United States foretell a challenging future given the many unique parallels to the anticipated “youth bulge.” Moreover, increasing numbers of second, third and fourth generation individuals from micro-diaspora communities, which includes the special situation of converts, are attracted to and are turning to radical Islamism as a conduit for political activism in support of religious beliefs. The vast majority of individuals who take the step from Islamist to jihadist, based on the religious-political ideology of Islamism, are young males from Muslim countries in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. The Muslim demographic bulge in Europe could become more radicalized if certain variables continue to exert a strong pull on the largely disaffected young, male immigrants living in Europe—exposure to critical phases of the radicalization process while in prison, in their ethnic community, or other social environments. The Muslim diaspora community in the United States, however, is less concerning compared to Europe due to its higher levels of diversity, access to education and economic success.

Underscoring the importance of this emerging challenge, violent radicalization currently is the focus of pending legislation in the United States.<sup>15</sup> The proposed legislation promises to target radicalization, recruitment and homegrown terrorism by improving the understanding of these challenges. The legislation also supports the development of information-based

approaches to prevention and mitigation of the impact that these trends pose. These information-based solutions may come from successful approaches identified in community policing. For example, shifting the balance from the “illegal” enforcement elements in favor of “legal” components in a community represents an important first step in supporting social norms—including prohibitions against violence—and the rule of law. Similar to successes associated with community policing in the United States, efforts specifically seeking to enhance the ability of local communities to support local governance and the rule of law show promise in reducing sectarian violence and may reduce the long-term costs and consequences associated with this particular challenge. Finally, recent approaches using “streetcraft to inform tradecraft”<sup>16</sup> designed to transcend traditional jurisdictional boundaries and functional domains in support of a comprehensive, coordinated approach to combating terrorism offer the opportunity for creative, information-based solutions to the prevention and mitigation of radicalization, recruitment and homegrown terrorism, particularly on the domestic front in the fight against terrorism.

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<sup>14</sup> Kathryn Haahr, “The Growth of Militant Islamist Micro-Diaspora Communities: Observations from Spain,” *CTC Sentinel* 1:4 (2008).

<sup>15</sup> The pending legislation is HR. 1955: Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007, and S.195: Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Kathleen Kiernan, “Hidden in Plain Sight - Intelligence Against Terrorism: Tradecraft or Streetcraft?” *Crime and Justice International* July-August (2006).



## Jama`at al-Fuqara': An Overblown Threat?

By Farhana Ali and William Rosenau

ALTHOUGH JAMA`AT AL-FUQARA' (JF) is virtually unknown to the general public, the group has periodically generated concern within U.S. intelligence and law enforcement circles. A Muslim sect with a long criminal past and extensive international connections, including ties to Pakistan's political and religious fringes, JF's activities have received heightened official and media scrutiny since 9/11. The organization has been described as a "terrorist outfit" with extensive links to al-Qa`ida;<sup>1</sup> as "one of the most elusive terrorist groups resident in the U.S.;"<sup>2</sup> and as "perhaps the most dangerous fundamentalist sect operating in the United States."<sup>3</sup> In 1999, the U.S. Department of State categorized JF as a "terrorist group,"<sup>4</sup> and more recently, in his important *CTC Sentinel* article on the organization, terrorism analyst Christopher Heffelfinger categorized JF as "a high risk for U.S. security."<sup>5</sup>

This article will offer some additional perspective on JF, or as the organization prefers to call itself, Muslims of the Americas (MOA).<sup>6</sup> It will develop a deeper understanding of the group by exploring some particularly salient issues, such as the nature of the JF/

MOA's rural compounds, and the organization's ongoing evolution. In addition, the article will touch on the relatively unexplored subject of group leader Shaykh Mubarak Ali Gilani's activities in Pakistan, drawing on interviews conducted by one of the authors in that country in the spring and summer of 2008. The article will conclude with a reframing of JF/MOA that positions the organization as a public-safety rather than a counter-terrorism challenge.

### JF/MOA Compounds

The organization maintains an estimated 20-30 compounds (known as *jama`ats*), primarily in the northeastern, mid-Atlantic, and southeastern regions of the United States. Compounds also reportedly exist in Canada, and in Trinidad and Tobago and other countries in the Caribbean basin, an important region for JF/MOA proselytizing.<sup>7</sup> A *jama`at* can house as many as 300 members, according to one source.<sup>8</sup> The percentage of JF/MOA's overall membership (estimated at 1,000-3,000)<sup>9</sup> that lives in these compounds is unknown. The camps are physically isolated and not particularly welcoming to outsiders. Members of the Red House, Virginia *jama`at* have been convicted of a variety of weapons-related offenses, and reports of gunfire and "military-style training" at the Islamberg compound in remote Tompkins, New York have drawn the attention of local authorities.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, there is no evidence that these or other *jama`ats* have functioned as "covert paramilitary training compounds," as the Colorado Attorney General's office alleged in December 2001.<sup>11</sup> It should also be mentioned that neither the presence of weapons (or even arsenals), nor weapons training are particularly unusual phenomena in rural America. It must also be noted that JF/MOA's self-imposed isolation from

a society it deems sinful and corrupt is hardly unique within the American religious tradition. Other Muslims, as well as Christians and members of other faiths, have engaged in various forms of intentional separation from American society. As early as 1938, Muhammad Ezaldeen, leader of the Addeynu Allahe-Universal Arabic Association (AAUAA), established the community of Jabul Arabiyya in West Valley, New

**"From Gilani's perspective, JF/MOA's most important feature could be its ability to raise financial resources for the Pakistani leader, who is alleged to support armed groups such as Hizb al-Mujahidin (HM) in Indian-occupied Kashmir."**

York. The creation of autonomous, self-sufficient rural communities was for Ezaldeen and his followers an expression of the doctrine of the *hijra*, a concept from seventh century Arabia that refers to a physical migration, dating back to the time when the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslims fled persecution in their homeland in Mecca to seek refuge in Medina. Moreover, the AAUAA argued that the right to establish such religious communities was constitutionally guaranteed.<sup>12</sup> This position is echoed in an MOA press release, which describes how the followers of "El Sheikh" have "left the decadence of the inner cities to practice the religious freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution."<sup>13</sup>

### An Organizational Rebranding?

Given the group's secrecy, and the scarcity of primary sources, any conclusions about JF/MOA are necessarily preliminary and tentative. What can be said with some degree of confidence is that the group is working to present a more respectable

1 "Jamaat ul-Fuqra," MilitantIslamMonitor.org, March 27, 2006.

2 John Kane and April Wall, *Identifying the Links Between White-Collar Crime and Terrorism* (Glen Allen, VA: National White Collar Crime Center, 2004), p. 17.

3 Sean Hill, *Extremist Groups: An International Compilation of Terrorist Organizations, Violent Political Groups, and Issue-Oriented Militant Movements* (Huntsville, TX: Sam Houston University, 2002), p. 750.

4 "1999 Patterns of Global Terrorism," U.S. Department of State, 2000. It should be noted, however, that the State Department dropped JF from subsequent editions of "Patterns of Global Terrorism." Moreover, the secretary of state has never designated JF as a "foreign terrorist organization," which unlike the "terrorist group" appellation carries with it a variety of criminal sanctions. See "Jamaat ul-Fuqra Designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization?" U.S. Department of State, January 31, 2001.

5 Christopher Heffelfinger, "Jama`at al-Fuqara': A Domestic Terrorist Threat to the United States?" *CTC Sentinel* 1:9 (2008).

6 Members also sometimes identify the organization as the International Qur'anic Open University.

7 Chris Zambelis, "The Threat of Islamic Radicalism in Suriname," *Terrorism Monitor* 4:21 (2006).

8 Stewart Bell, "Extremists Train at Communes," *National Post*, June 22, 2006.

9 "Group Profile: Al-Fuqra," MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base, accessed June 6, 2006.

10 "Authorities Eye Catskills Commune," United Press International, June 4, 2007.

11 "Information Regarding Colorado's Investigation and Prosecution of Members of Jamaat Ul Fuqra," Colorado Attorney General's Office, December 10, 2001.

12 Robert Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 34.

13 "Muslims of the Americas Initial Press Release," November 28, 2002, previously available at www.holyislamville.org.



appearance to the outside world. As noted by Heffelfinger and other analysts, JF/MOA earned a notorious reputation in law enforcement circles during the 1980s and 1990s when members were convicted for crimes ranging from fraud to conspiracy to commit murder. Clement Rodney Hampton-El, an alleged JF/MOA member, was the lone American among the conspirators convicted in the so-called “landmarks plot” to attack the UN headquarters and other prominent targets in New York.<sup>14</sup> Group members Barry Adams (alias Tyrone Cole) and Wali Muhamad (alias Robert Johnson) were prosecuted successfully in 1994 for conspiring to bomb a Hindu temple in Toronto.<sup>15</sup> JF/MOA members have also been implicated in attacks on Laotian and Hari Krishna temples, and on members of a rival Muslim sect, the Ahmadiyya.<sup>16</sup> More recently, JF/MOA has been offering a more benign public face. “We abide by the constitution,” a member told a reporter in 2002. “We do support our government, and we are peace lovers.”<sup>17</sup>

Whether such statements reflect a genuine move toward the religious and political mainstream is difficult to determine. JF/MOA, facing increased and unwanted scrutiny, may be attempting to obscure ongoing illicit operations. The group’s preference for the names MOA and the International Qur’anic Open University (IQOU), and its denial that JF exists, may reflect a desire to “rebrand” and reposition the organization, or possibly an effort at deception.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, JF/MOA’s public

service activities, such as its Hand to Hands Social Service Agency, which according to the group’s website provides assistance to victims of natural disasters and other services, could represent either an attempt at “mainstreaming”—taking part in charitable activities is a religious obligation for all Muslims—or continued deceit.<sup>19</sup> Further complicating any assessment is the possibility that such measures could simultaneously signify normalization and deception. Given the scarcity of credible data on the group, it is currently impossible to reach any firm conclusions about its development.

Looking ahead, one indicator that could help analysts determine whether JF/MOA is in fact moving toward the mainstream is the trend in the group’s criminal behavior. Violent criminality was a notorious feature of JF/MOA

**“It is unlikely, however, that JF/MOA will become a terrorist threat, or serve as a U.S. platform for al-Qa`ida.”**

during the 1980s and 1990s, as noted above. As even opponents of the group concede, however, JF/MOA has not engaged in that sort of criminal behavior since the early 1990s.<sup>20</sup> Since its founding in 1980, JF/MOA has also engaged extensively in revenue-generating crime, such as fraudulent claims for workers’ compensation. Although firm evidence is difficult to find, investigations into alleged fraud at a JF/MOA charter school near Fresno, California suggest that the organization continues to generate illicit revenue.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, from Gilani’s perspective, JF/MOA’s most important feature could be its ability to raise financial resources

for the Pakistani leader, who is alleged to support armed groups such as Hizb al-Mujahidin (HM) in Indian-occupied Kashmir.<sup>22</sup> According to one former JF/MOA member, members “used to send 10% of all their earnings to the shaykh and then it got bumped up from 10% to 30%.”<sup>23</sup> Transfers to Gilani went “in cash through elders who frequently visited Pakistan.”<sup>24</sup> A dramatic reduction in such remittances—and in JF/MOA-associated crime—would represent an important development that could signal the increasing normalization of the group.

#### The Pakistani Connection

Gilani earned international notoriety in connection with the kidnapping and murder of Daniel Pearl, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter who was abducted while on his way to interview the shaykh in early 2002. Khalid Khawaja, a former intelligence officer allegedly tied to Gilani, was Pearl’s guide in Pakistan, according to a respected local journalist.<sup>25</sup> Why Pearl was seeking an interview remains uncertain, as does Gilani’s role in the case. Gilani was detained briefly by Pakistani authorities, and he has insisted publicly that he had nothing to do with the Pearl case, al-Qa`ida, or Usama bin Ladin. He also denies any connection with Richard Reid, the so-called “shoe bomber” who is alleged to have been a Gilani disciple. “I’m a reformer, educationist,” he told an American television reporter in March 2002.<sup>26</sup>

Since then, Gilani has slipped back into obscurity. Interviews with government officials, analysts, and journalists in Pakistan this year suggested that Gilani was no longer receiving any extensive scrutiny. A high-ranking official in the Ministry of the Interior and a

14 As Heffelfinger noted, the subject of Hampton-El’s alleged membership never emerged during the trial. The closest evidence of a JF/MOA connection is a June 1993 *New York Times* article, whose author reports that unnamed New York City police detectives said that Hampton-El “worked closely with al-Fuqra.” See Craig Wolff, “Police Link Suspect to a Radical Sect,” *New York Times*, June 27, 1993.

15 Dominic Kalipersad, “Trinis Deported for Terror Links,” *Trinidad Guardian*, April 8, 2006.

16 Dannin, pp. 35-37. The attacks on the Ahmadiyya is an irony, given the central role Ahmadiyya missionaries from South Asia played in introducing African-Americans to Islam in the early decades of the 20th century.

17 Quoted in Jim Puzzanghera, “Muslim Group Denies Involvement in Terrorist Activities,” *San Jose Mercury News*, January 10, 2002.

18 See, for example, *Khadija A. Ghafur v. Jonathan Bernstein et al.*, First Appellate District of the California Court of Appeal, 2005.

19 The website of Hand to Hands Social Service Agency can be accessed at [www.handtohands.org](http://www.handtohands.org).

20 See, for example, Zachary Crowley, “Jamaat al-Fuqra Dossier,” Center for Policing Terrorism, March 16, 2005.

21 Sean Webby and Brandon Bailey, “The Mysterious Saga of Sister Khadijah,” *San Jose Mercury News*, February 11, 2007; *Organized Crime in California: Annual Report to the California Legislature 2004* (Sacramento: California Department of Justice, 2005), p. 24.

22 See, for example, “Guide to Wahhabi Organizations in North America,” Center for Policing Terrorism, undated. According to one source, Pakistani intelligence provided much of HM’s initial funding. Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States That Sponsor Terrorism* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 165.

23 Quoted in Catherine Herridge, “Muslim-American Group Suspected of Channelling Money to Radical Pakistani Cleric,” Fox News, June 22, 2007.

24 Ibid.

25 Personal communication, Khalid Khawaja, September 2008.

26 “Sheik Gilani: CBS’ Man in Pakistan Tracks Him Down,” 60 Minutes, March 13, 2002.

senior military officer both dismissed Gilani as irrelevant. According to one respected reporter, "Shaykh Gilani now keeps a low public profile," adding that Gilani operates at two levels: politically (through figures such as Khawaja), and militarily, through his support for extremist groups in Kashmir.<sup>27</sup> According to another Pakistani journalist, "There is no doubt that he is still supporting the jihad in Kashmir and Afghanistan, but so is every other jihadist leader...Gilani is not important to the Pakistani security services right now. He is not on their terrorists' watch list."<sup>28</sup>

During the 1980s and 1990s, JF/MOA reportedly sent more than 100 of its members to Pakistan. According to JF/MOA, they went solely for religious study, but U.S. sources cited in press accounts claimed that the real purpose was to receive military training, with dozens of individuals going on to the "fields of jihad" in Kashmir, Chechnya, and Afghanistan.<sup>29</sup> Whether JF/MOA continues to send its members to Pakistan for religious instruction or other purposes is uncertain; however, the high-profile prosecution of members of the so-called "Virginia Jihad Network" for traveling to Pakistan to receive terrorist training, and heightened law enforcement and intelligence scrutiny, may have dampened enthusiasm for such ventures.

### Conclusion

JF/MOA's long history of criminality, and its apparent role as Gilani's North American "back office," makes the group a proper subject for official interest and attention. It is unlikely, however, that JF/MOA will become a terrorist threat, or serve as a U.S. platform for al-Qa`ida, as some sources have alleged. Heightened scrutiny of JF/MOA since 9/11 makes it an improbable operating partner for al-Qa`ida. Moreover, as Heffelfinger observed, Gilani and Bin Ladin are best understood as rivals rather than as confederates. In addition, Gilani's attention has always been directed principally at Pakistan and

Kashmir, with North America serving merely as a financial means to an end. To the extent that U.S. national security policy aims to cut off funding for armed groups such as the ones that operate in Kashmir, and to the extent that JF/MOA is helping to fund those groups via Gilani, the organization poses a counter-terrorism challenge. Within the United States, however, JF/MOA should be framed in law enforcement

## **"Within the United States, however, JF/MOA should be framed in law enforcement rather than counter-terrorism terms."**

rather than counter-terrorism terms. For American Muslims, the challenge will be to help the group (or, perhaps, individual members) move away from the wilder shores of extremism that have been fostered by isolation.

For researchers, JF/MOA is likely to remain an analytical conundrum. Much of the available information on the group is dated or questionable. The group's membership is often described as primarily African-American, and made up largely of converts.<sup>30</sup> To what extent these factors have shaped JF/MOA merits additional study, as does the question of the group's place (if any) within the American black-nationalist movement. Moreover, little is known about the organization's North American structure, decision-making practices, or recruitment strategy. JF/MOA, with its charismatic leadership, secrecy, and physical isolation, would seem to resemble other religious cults, or as sociologists of religion prefer to term them, New Religious Movements.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, one federal investigator said that the group's behavior and self-imposed isolation has led government officials to characterize the group

primarily as a cult.<sup>32</sup> Only a tiny handful of cults have engaged in acts of "collective implosion."<sup>33</sup> Yet, given JF/MOA's history of violence, its access to weapons, and the physical isolation of its members, law enforcement and social service agencies should remain alert to any indications that the organization is on a violently self-destructive trajectory.

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*The views expressed in this article are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of RAND or its research sponsors.*

<sup>27</sup> Personal e-mail communication, anonymous journalist, September 2008.

<sup>28</sup> Personal interview, anonymous Pakistani journalist, April 2008.

<sup>29</sup> David E. Kaplan, "Made in the U.S.A.," *U.S. News & World Report*, June 10, 2002.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Chris Zambelis, "Radical Trends in African-American Islam," *Terrorism Monitor* 4:16 (2006).

<sup>31</sup> Alternatively, JF/MOA might be understood as a political cult. For more on this concept, see Dennis Tourish and Tim Wohlforth, *On the Edge: Political Cults Right and Left* (Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 2000).

<sup>32</sup> Personal interview, anonymous federal investigator, Washington, D.C., June 2008.

<sup>33</sup> J. Gordon Melton and David G. Bromley, "Challenging Misconceptions About New Religions-Violence Connections," in David G. Bromley and J. Gordon Melton eds., *Cults, Religion, and Violence* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 48.

## The Threat of Terrorism to the 2010 Soccer World Cup in South Africa

By Anneli Botha

IN 2010, SOUTH AFRICA will host the FIFA World Cup, a major international sporting event. Although South Africa has previously hosted a number of international sports events<sup>1</sup> and large gatherings<sup>2</sup> that attracted regional and international attention, hosting the soccer World Cup is a markedly different security scenario. The amount of domestic and international attention focused on each World Cup is tremendous. In anticipation of this coming event, it is important to assess the terrorism risks that could threaten the competition. South Africa is not on the same level of alertness toward terrorism than other countries in the region, and it is this degree of comfort that contributes to the country's vulnerability as a potential target. South Africa has experienced domestic terrorist attacks in the past, and during the last decade a number of high-profile al-Qa`ida operatives and other transnational Islamist terrorists have traveled through its borders. These factors demonstrate that South Africa and the 2010 games could be at risk.

### Domestic Terrorism

There are a number of domestic terrorist threats facing South Africa in the lead-up to the 2010 games. Although active or dormant domestic terrorist organizations might have previously focused their attention on exclusively domestic grievances and targets, prior experience indicates that domestic terrorist groups might capitalize on the international attention the games offer in an attempt to achieve recognition for their grievances. Although South Africa's domestic terrorist groups are currently dormant, the country has been confronted with periodic incidents of right-wing extremism since 1994, and also with an Islamic-oriented pressure or vigilante group known as

People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD). This latter group initiated a campaign of urban terrorism in Cape Town that lasted until 2000.

### Right-Wing Extremism

Politically, South Africa is currently confronted with a number of challenges, most notably the sudden resignation of President Thabo Mbeki in September. Fear that leadership changes in the country might also contribute to a change in political direction could prompt right-wing extremists to act in conjunction with existing motivating factors such as affirmative action, land reform, and cultural marginalization. The Boeremag, or Boer Force, was the last right-wing group that raised concern, yet the manifestation of right-wing extremism sporadically comes and goes and often involves a core group of people who plan and execute their activities in a clandestine fashion. This makes it extremely challenging to come to an accurate assessment of the future structure, reach and activities of right-wing extremist groups.

Since 1994, these groups have tended to use explosive devices directed at the broader infrastructure, including bridges, railway lines and dams. They have also, however, previously planned attacks on soccer games, such as the foiled plot in December 2002 in which Boeremag member Herman van Rooyen rigged a car bomb with 384 kilograms of explosives, together with two bags of nuts and bolts. The car bomb was apparently meant for a game between Kaizer Chiefs and the Sundowns at Loftus Versfeld.<sup>3</sup> Despite these concerns, however, it is still debatable whether right-wing groups would broaden their target selection to include non-South African nationals.<sup>4</sup>

### People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) and Associated Organizations

Although PAGAD and the Muslims Against Global Oppression (MAGO) indicated a prior willingness to target

foreign representatives, as manifested in the attack on Planet Hollywood on August 25, 1998, their target selection was predominately domestic. Irrespective of the fact that the violent activities of PAGAD came to a standstill in 2000—as a result of a number of successful operations executed by South African security forces—the threat from domestic Islamist extremists might come in the form of small cell structures, motivated by strong anti-Western sentiments and fueled by U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. The underlying reasons and sentiment that led to the structure or changes in PAGAD's target selection still exist. In addition to the fact that local community members have called for a return of PAGAD as an answer to the criminal and drug problem in the Western Cape, members of the Muslim community were previously extremely vocal against the West, in particular the United States and its "war on terrorism." Although demonstrating against the war in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Israeli occupation of Palestine should not be categorized as a security threat, it is still significant as a manifestation of sentiment.

Furthermore, like many countries, South Africa faces the threat from possible homegrown terrorists who could become attracted to al-Qa`ida's ideology and download military training manuals from the internet. Countering the threat from radicalized small cells is a daunting task.

### Transnational Terrorism

South Africa has not been victim to a transnational terrorist attack on its soil. Nevertheless, South Africa is often categorized as a "safe haven" for transnational terrorists since a number of them have traveled through the country. These individuals include:

- Khalfan Khamis Mohamed, a Tanzanian national and al-Qa`ida operative who fled to Cape Town in 1999 in the aftermath of the August 1998 bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.<sup>5</sup>

- Saud Memon, a Pakistani with suspected al-Qa`ida connections who, according to media reports, was

1 Among these events were the Rugby World Cup in 1995, African Cup of Nations in 1996, the All Africa Games in 1999 and the Cricket World Cup in 2003.

2 These include the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and the Non-Aligned Movement summit in 1998.

3 "Boeremag Planned to Detonate 384kg Bomb," *Independent Online* [Cape Town], December 15, 2002.

4 The focus of planned and executed attacks perpetrated by right-wing extremists was to date exclusively directed at the government and the black community in South Africa. Although soccer is associated with the black community, targeting an international sports event would be a new trend.

5 Jean le May and Andre Koopman, "How South Africa Nabbed Embassy 'Bomber,'" *Cape Argus*, October 8, 1999.



allegedly “picked up” by U.S. officials in South Africa on March 7, 2003.<sup>6</sup>

- In April 2004, the national police commissioner announced that three suspected al-Qa`ida operatives of Syrian and Jordanian origin were arrested in South Africa, after they had stayed in the country for almost a year.<sup>7</sup>

- Haroon Rashid Aswat was implicated in the July 7, 2005 London bombings and for setting up a terrorist training camp in Oregon in 1999. He was arrested in Zambia on July 20, 2005, but prior to his arrest he had lived in Johannesburg for five months.<sup>8</sup>

- Mohammed Gulzar was a suspect in the UK trial of eight men accused of plotting to blow up airliners using liquid explosives as they traveled between the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada in 2006. British authorities alleged that he entered Britain on a flight from South Africa via Mauritius under the name of Altaf Ravat on July 18, 2006 after he had lived in South Africa for a few years. His fake passport also showed a one-day trip to Swaziland on July 13, 2006. Gulzar, however, was acquitted in September 2008.<sup>9</sup>

These examples have raised concern that there could be undetected al-Qa`ida-affiliated terrorists in South Africa. Since the announcement that South Africa would host the 2010 World Cup was made in 2004, the possibility exists that a “sleeping cell” could be preparing for a terrorist attack on the upcoming games.

#### Security Challenges

There are a number of factors that terrorists could exploit to target the 2010 World Cup. The following includes a list of these factors, in addition to suggested steps that the South African government should take to mitigate the risks.

#### *Availability and Protection of Selected Targets*

FIFA will be responsible for the security at the World Cup in partnership with the South African Police Service. In addition to activity at the stadiums, the organizers as well as private businesses will make provisions for additional entertainment, including: exhibition halls at each venue, big screen viewing facilities close to the stadium, big

**“Terrorists who hope to attract media attention might consider an attack directed at a large concentration of people where the traditional security measures are not in place.”**

screen facilities that fall outside the responsibility of FIFA, and sports cafés that will attract spectators. These additional activities and venues bring their own unique security challenges. Terrorists who hope to attract media attention might consider an attack directed at a large concentration of people where the traditional security measures are not in place.

Although hardening potential targets is a clear necessity, it will also be important to inform South African citizens of their responsibilities in acting as the “eyes and ears” of the police. There is already a police hotline, but it may be prudent to establish a dedicated open line of communication for suspicious activities in relation to the World Cup.

#### *Access to Weaponry and/or Explosives*

The ability to acquire military or commercial grade explosives in South Africa increases the danger that terrorists might pose. South Africa is experiencing an alarming increase in Automated Teller Machine (ATM) bombings in which commercial explosives are used. To place this threat in context, ATM bombings have increased by 3,000% in the past three years. Using explosives stolen from mines, an estimated 292 ATMs were blown up across the country between

January 1, 2008 and July 12, 2008.<sup>10</sup> Although the motivation is purely criminal, the possibility exists that an individual or small group of terrorists might buy commercial grade explosives from criminal elements on the black market. Driven by financial gain, criminals with access to commercial explosives might not have a moral objection to selling them, especially when the ultimate aims of the buyer are concealed. The Madrid train bombings served as an example of the link between terrorism and crime.

In addressing this vulnerability, countering rising crime should be seen as part of an all inclusive holistic strategy. Although considerable efforts are taken to counter specific trends—for example, the theft of commercial explosives used in ATM bombings—the potential use of commercial explosives acquired through criminal activities should be factored into security calculations.

#### *Operating Undetected*

A key concern is the ease in which potential terrorists can enter or exit South Africa. The protection and monitoring of formal and informal points of entry are areas of concern. Although counter-measures were put in place at international airports to address this vulnerability, South Africa is confronted with long porous borders that are difficult to monitor and control. The possibility of terrorists using informal points of entry, also used by illegal immigrants from neighboring countries, was confirmed by Haroon Rashid Aswat, who was eventually arrested in Zambia. A sub-regional approach and cooperation between police agencies and immigration in securing land borders is vital. The Southern Africa Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO), the sub-regional bureau of Interpol, has already committed itself to assisting South Africa.

Corruption also plays a role, particularly in relation to the ability of non-South African nationals to acquire South African identity documents and passports. It is particularly the latter that has led to growing concern within the international community.

6 Azaz Syed and Abbas Naqvi, “Saud Memon Dies in Hospital,” *Daily Times*, May 19, 2007.

7 “South African Police Say Key Landmarks Targeted by Al-Qa`idah,” BBC, August 4, 2004.

8 “SA-Linked Terror Suspect Detained in Zambia,” *Daily News*, July 28, 2005.

9 Ian MacLeod, “Al-Qaeda’s Central Leadership Active, Experts Say,” *Ottawa Citizen*, April 30, 2008.

10 “ATM Bombings up 3000%” News24.com, July 12, 2008.



In contrast to the falsification of these documents, criminals and potential terrorists have access to blank official passports and have even managed to get passports issued under fraudulent names. For example, in August 2004 security personnel in London recovered hundreds of South African passports.<sup>11</sup> Despite whistle-blowing initiatives and better salaries for government officials, corruption can only be countered through initiatives to rebuild essential values and encourage professionalism.

#### *Ability to be Incorporated in the Local Community*

How well terrorists can fit into the local community often determines their success. This is accomplished primarily through two methods. The first is marriage with a local national, which also includes getting formally married by fraudulent means. The second is through pockets of support among immigrant communities (legal or illegal). The lack of trust and communal responsibility that exists in South Africa makes this an area for concern.

#### **Conclusion**

Preparing and hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2010 brings tremendous opportunities to South Africa, from awakening a sense of patriotism, to the creation of new employment opportunities and the building and revamping of infrastructure. Nevertheless, the 2010 World Cup also creates opportunities for criminals and terrorists to achieve their objectives. It is essential that security forces take this risk seriously so that they can mitigate any potential terrorist threats or security weaknesses that arise during the next two years.

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## **Iraq as the Focus for Apocalyptic Scenarios**

By David Cook

IRAQ HAS A LONG history of being the center of the Muslim world. Specifically, there are numerous prophecies about the fighting due to take place in Iraq at the end of time—fighting that will herald the revelation of the Muslim messianic figure, the Mahdi. These traditions and their contemporary interpretation, on both a popular level (throughout the Muslim world) and on a more specific level (by radical Sunni and Shi'a groups either fighting or supporting warfare in Iraq), are important for comprehending the conflict and its ramifications. Visualizing the ideological field that is attracting and keeping fighters and “martyrs” is critical for counteracting the dangerous appeal that violent apocalyptic groups, such as Jund al-Sama', have among the larger population in Iraq.

#### **Iraq in Classical Muslim Apocalyptic Literature and Today**

Apocalyptic traditions in Islam occur in both the Sunni and the Shi'a traditions. In general, the Sunni traditions emphasize the fighting with the Byzantine Christians that is to take place in the region of northern Syria and Iraq, culminating in the taking of the Byzantine capital of Constantinople (which historically occurred in 1453 AD). This fighting will then be interrupted by the appearance of the Muslim anti-Christ figure, the Dajjal, who will lead the entire world astray (with the exception of those Muslims known as *al-ta'ifa al-mansura*),<sup>1</sup> and will only be defeated with the aid of Jesus, who will return from the heavens to the city of Jerusalem or to Damascus. At approximately the same time, the messianic figure will arise, and together with Jesus usher in a messianic state with its capital in Jerusalem.

In contrast, the Shi'a traditions do not emphasize fighting against external enemies such as the Byzantines, but against Sunnis. Apocalyptic prophecies for the Shi'a center around the figure of the Twelfth Imam (called either

al-Mahdi or al-Qa'im), who from a historical point of view was occulted from human sight in 874 AD, and will be revealed at the end of the world to usher in a messianic age. His primary enemies are those opponents of the Prophet Muhammad's family, mainly

### **“Both the Sunni and Shi'a have a coherent messianic framework in which to place contemporary events.”**

descendants of Mu'awiyya bin Abi Sufyan,<sup>2</sup> who fought against 'Ali bin Abi Talib, the ancestor of the Mahdi. Mu'awiyya's descendent is a figure called the Sufyani who for the Muslims of Syria was a messianic figure (because of their veneration for Mu'awiyya), but for Shi'a is the equivalent of the Dajjal. In this way, history will repeat itself, with the Mahdi fighting against the Sufyani in Iraq and defeating him, and then establishing the messianic state with its capital in Kufa (today, south of Najaf).

Both the Sunni and Shi'a have a coherent messianic framework in which to place contemporary events. For Sunnis, this fact has led to a huge growth in popular apocalyptic literature. This type of literature, however, is not useful for radical Muslims because it promotes a sense of fatalism. If God has already foreordained destruction for the United States and its allies, then what is the point of going out and fighting them? The most useful form of apocalypse for radicals, therefore, is one in which fighting is portrayed as an open-ended process that will continue until either victory or martyrdom are obtained. Probably the most useful tradition conveying this message is the following: “A group (*ta'ifa*) of my community will continue, fighting for the truth, victorious over those who oppose them, until the last of them face the Dajjal (or in variants: until the Hour of Judgment).” Needless to say, this tradition is featured frequently in

11 “South African Police Say Key Landmarks Targeted by Al-Qa'idah.”

1 See, for instance, the *Ansar al-Sunna* magazine from September 2005.

2 Mu'awiyya bin Abi Sufyan was the caliph from 661-80 AD.

jihadist journals from Iraq.<sup>3</sup>

With the rise of radical Islam, the most common apocalyptic prophecy was a general one used to emphasize the idea that the entire non-Muslim world is involved in a conspiracy to destroy Islam:

The Messenger of God said: The nations are about to flock against you [the Muslims] from every horizon, just as hungry people flock to a kettle. We said: O Messenger of God, will we be few on that day? He said: No, you will be many as far as your number goes, but you will be scum, like the scum of the flash-flood, since fear will be removed from the hearts of your enemies, and weakness (*wahn*) will be placed in your hearts. We said: O Messenger of God, what does the word *wahn* mean? He said: Love of this world and fear of death.<sup>4</sup>

With such a tradition, any weakness of the Muslim community that occurs in the future is due to the abandonment of jihad. With the added idea of the world falling upon the Muslims like “hungry people,” one has a worldwide conspiracy and a justification to use any method to defend Islam.

#### Radical Sunni Muslim Development of Apocalyptic Materials

Attitudes of radical Muslims toward the apocalyptic heritage of Islam vary. On the one hand, this material contains many apparent foreshadowing prophecies of current events. These are developed in popular literature sold on the streets in the Arabic and Urdu speaking worlds and translated into other languages (English, French, Indonesian and Uzbek). Although al-Qa`ida and its ideological affiliates made use of apocalyptic language, it is comparatively rare to find any specific

prophecies cited by them. In fact, until the end of 2001 major radical Muslim thinkers such as Abu Mus`ab al-Suri ridiculed the use of apocalyptic prophecies on a popular level. Since that time, Usama bin Ladin, Ayman al-Zawahiri and other senior al-Qa`ida leaders have not employed clear-cut apocalyptic prophecies, probably fearing their divisive nature.

With the rise of Abu Mus`ab al-Zarqawi, however, this changed. Through his writings, al-Zarqawi pioneered the identification of U.S. forces with the Byzantines, and positioned himself as one who was fighting on behalf of the entire Muslim community in the apocalyptic wars (for which he used the classical term *malahim*). He made little use of formal apocalyptic traditions until the sieges of Falluja in 2004 and 2005, but for the last two years of his life his attitudes changed.<sup>5</sup> Apocalyptic traditions for al-Zarqawi supplied the framework for a landscape of warfare enabling him to portray the conflict as an absolute life or death scenario. There is no doubt that this portrayal was controversial and ultimately led to Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi and al-Zawahiri both remonstrating with him. Nevertheless, with the strategy of demonizing the Shi`a population and employing frequent suicide attacks against both it and its holiest locations, it is difficult to see what else al-Zarqawi could have done.

Use of apocalyptic materials in Iraq represents a sea-change for radical Muslims, and constitutes an as-yet untapped source of energy;<sup>6</sup> however, it is also a weapon that might be used against them (as it was against al-Zarqawi). On the benefits side for radical Muslims, there is nothing quite like the exhilaration and exaltation that a fighter feels when he is certain that he is fulfilling prophecy or is part of the “saved group” (*al-ta'ifa al-mansura*). Among the disadvantages for radical Muslims, however, is the fact that such

material promotes a mindset that is not calculated to win the neutral over, and can alienate even strong supporters of the cause because of its excesses (mass suicide attacks and destruction of society).

Two dangers that al-Zarqawi avoided might yet occur in the future use of apocalyptic materials: one is that some

**“Through his writings, al-Zarqawi pioneered the identification of U.S. forces with the Byzantines, and positioned himself as one who was fighting on behalf of the entire Muslim community in the apocalyptic wars.”**

figure might actually proclaim himself to be the Mahdi, and the second is that people or groups might make specific prophecies using dates. Specific proclamations or predictions of this type can lead to divisions within a group or ridicule of it by the larger Muslim world. Both of these problematic issues have not been avoided by other groups (such as the Jund al-Sama' group that proclaimed a Mahdi). One foresees the proclamation of other Mahdis in the Sunni world as the Islamic year 1500 (approximately 2076) approaches.

#### The Shi`a Respond

Since the Shi`a messianic figure is tied to a historical (or semi-historical) personality, there are few Mahdi appearances documented among them. With the election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Iran in 2005, however, there has been a heightened profile for the Mahdi, and occasionally attempts to predict his appearance, utilizing the cultic center at Jamkaran (near Qom in Iran) where he is said to be hiding. Yet the conflict in Iraq has provided most of the messianic excitement in contemporary Shi`ism, best illustrated by the Mahdi Army of Muqtada al-Sadr.

Contemporary Shi`a apocalyptic literature outside of Iraq responds to

3 For example, see page three of the *al-Fursan* jihadist magazine from November 2005, which can be accessed at [www.e-prism.org/images/Fursan\\_-\\_mag6.pdf](http://www.e-prism.org/images/Fursan_-_mag6.pdf), and page four of the *Dhurwat al-Sanam* jihadist magazine, which can be accessed at [www.e-prism.org/images/thurwat\\_assanam.pdf](http://www.e-prism.org/images/thurwat_assanam.pdf).

4 Al-Silfi, *al-Fawa'id al-bisan fi hadith Thawban* (Casablanca: Dar Ibn `Affan, 2001), pp. 7-14. This was alluded to by Usama bin Ladin in his 1998 *fatwa*, in Bruce Lawrence et al., *Messages to the World* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 59.

5 David Cook, “Abu Musa`b al-Suri and Abu Musa`b al-Zarqawi: The Apocalyptic Theorist and the Apocalyptic Practitioner,” forthcoming paper.

6 For example, notice how the September 2005 issue of the journal *al-Jami`* linked the Iraq conflict with that of Palestine using the apocalyptic interpretation of Qur'an 17:4-8. A copy of the journal can be downloaded at [www.e-prism.org/images/mag01\\_1\\_.pdf](http://www.e-prism.org/images/mag01_1_.pdf).

Sunni radicals. While he was alive, al-Zarqawi personified the figure of the Sufyani (ironically, he was even from the area of Jordan from which the Sufyani was supposed to appear) through his activities.<sup>7</sup> Today, the Shi'a apocalyptic prophecies are more focused against the United States and are closer to mainstream Sunni materials than they were three to four years ago. This fact has also led to the appearance of

### **“The Shi'a, on the other hand, are in a much more dominant position in Iraq and have a great deal to lose by embracing apocalyptic prophecies.”**

apocalyptic groups that bridge the gap between Sunnism and Shi'ism, not easy in the context of Iraq. Jund al-Sama' in southern Iraq (active during January 2007 and January 2008) is an example of such a group, with a specific proclamation of Ahmad al-Hasan as the Mahdi.<sup>8</sup> The full story of this group has yet to be told, but according to reports in which the Mahdi intended to kill the religious leadership of the Shi'a (including Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani) fulfillment of prophecy is clear. Several of the traditions concerning the Mahdi from the classical period say specifically that he will kill the Muslim religious leadership (because of their betrayal of the truth). Other methods used by apocalyptic groups (most probably al-Qa'ida and its associates), such as the destruction of mosques, can also be found in the traditions.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Conflicts and Apocalyptic Prophecies**

Wars and apocalyptic upheaval have traditionally been tied together in

many world religions.<sup>10</sup> Islam is no exception to this rule. The use of apocalyptic prophecies, however, is a matter that needs to be handled delicately in order for it to successfully hoist a revolutionary group into power. Traditionally, the more common use of apocalyptic prophecies has been made by weak, marginal and even desperate groups who have an exaggerated sense of their divinely ordained position. Such a group is al-Qa'ida, including its ideological affiliates. It has been significantly weakened during the recent past, and could turn once again to the use of apocalypse, not seeing that it has anything to lose. The Shi'a, on the other hand, are in a much more dominant position in Iraq and have a great deal to lose by embracing apocalyptic prophecies. As a result, *fatawa* by al-Sistani do not mention them at all,<sup>11</sup> while messianic beliefs are utilized by up-and-coming Shi'a groups such as that of Muqtada al-Sadr, or those entirely outside the power structure such as Jund al-Sama'.

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7 Abd al-Karim al-Zabidi, *Asr al-Sufyani* (Beirut: Dar al-Hadi, 2006), pp. 222-23; Ibrahim Surur, *al-Mahdi al-muntazar wa-abdath al-zuhur* (Beirut: Dar al-Safwa, 2006), pp. 246-64; Mansur 'Abd al-Hakim, *al-'Iraq: Ard al-nabu'at wa-l-fitan* (Damascus: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 2005), pp. 75-76.

8 Other alternative names given in the news sources are Mahmud al-Hasani, or that his original name was Samir Abu Qammar.

9 David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 2002), pp. 17-18, 248-50, 343.

10 Arthur Mendel, *Vision and Violence* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

11 Note his *Abdath al-istifta'at al-'aqa'id* (Beirut: Dar al-Jawadain, 2007), p. 97, in which he avoids any answers about the coming of the Mahdi.

## **Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity**

September 16, 2008 (UNITED STATES): Central Intelligence Agency Director Michael Hayden said that “there is no greater national security threat facing the United States than al-Qaida and its associates,” warning that al-Qa'ida is the CIA's top nuclear concern because it has the intent to use a nuclear weapon should it be able to acquire one. Hayden also said that his agency does not believe that Usama bin Ladin is still the head of al-Qa'ida's day-to-day operations as the jihadist leader “is spending a great deal of his energy merely surviving.” Hayden does believe, however, that killing or capturing Bin Ladin would have a powerful impact on al-Qa'ida. – *AP, September 16*

September 16, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Three Pakistani soldiers were killed after Taliban fighters attacked their checkpoint in the Swat Valley of the North-West Frontier Province. The attack began when a suicide car bomber detonated his explosives as security personnel approached his vehicle at the checkpoint. After the explosion, a group of militants engaged the rest of the soldiers. – *AFP, September 16*

September 16, 2008 (THAILAND): Muslim separatist insurgents in southern Thailand shot dead two Muslim rubber tappers who worked as village defense volunteers in Yala Province. When police and villagers arrived at the scene after the killings, the insurgents detonated a 20 kilogram bomb, wounding five policemen and three villagers. – *Reuters, September 16*

September 17, 2008 (IRAQ): Twin car bombs ripped through the al-Khark district in western Baghdad, killing eight people. – *AFP, September 17*

September 17, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb exploded in eastern Afghanistan, killing four international soldiers and one Afghan national. Authorities did not identify the exact location of the incident. – *AP, September 16*

September 17, 2008 (YEMEN): A group calling itself Islamic Jihad in Yemen launched a multipronged attack on the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a, leaving 11 people



dead, in addition to six of the attackers. "The attack involved multiple vehicle-borne devices and armed personnel on foot, seemingly in an attempt to try to breach the embassy's perimeter, enter the compound and inflict further damage and loss of life," stated an Associated Press report. Analysts suspect that the attackers were linked to al-Qa`ida. None of those killed or wounded were U.S. diplomats or embassy employees. – *AP, September 18*

September 17, 2008 (PAKISTAN): According to security officials, Pakistani fighter jets bombed a series of militant hideouts in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing at least 19 fighters. – *AFP, September 18*

September 18, 2008 (GLOBAL): A new survey released by the Pew Research Center found that the number of Muslims around the world who think suicide attacks are acceptable has fallen significantly in the past six years. – *AFP, September 19*

September 18, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Taliban militants in Swat District of the North-West Frontier Province released eight policemen who had been held captive since July 29. – *Dawn, September 19*

September 19, 2008 (GLOBAL): An al-Qa`ida video marking the anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks appeared on the internet. The video's release was apparently delayed due to technical problems, as a number of al-Qa`ida's main websites went offline. In the video, al-Qa`ida's commander for Afghanistan, Shaykh Sa`id Mustafa Abu'l-Yazid, promised "more large-scale attacks" in Afghanistan and called on militants in Pakistan to "strike the interests of Crusader [Western] allies in Pakistan." The video is titled, "The Results of Seven Years of Crusades." – *Reuters, September 20; AP, September 20*

September 19, 2008 (UNITED KINGDOM): Hammad Munshi was sentenced to two years in jail after being convicted of making a record of information likely to provide practical assistance to a person committing an act of terrorism. Munshi, who committed the crime when he was 16-years-old, downloaded jihadist military manuals from the internet, and then passed the information to two other

individuals who were planning attacks on non-Muslims. Munshi is now 18-years-old. – *dailyrecord.co.uk, September 20*

September 19, 2008 (GERMANY): German authorities arrested two men on terrorism charges, alleging that they were involved in a cell that was planning mass bombing attacks on U.S. targets in Germany in 2007. The suspects, a Turkish national and a German citizen, allegedly traveled to Pakistan in 2007 with the goal of receiving military training at camps run by the al-Qa`ida-affiliated Islamic Jihad Union. – *Washington Post, September 20*

September 19, 2008 (SOMALIA): Islamist militants exchanged intense gunfire with Somali Transitional Federal Government forces and Ethiopian troops in Mogadishu, causing the deaths of an estimated 15 civilians. The fighting came after an African Union military aircraft defied an al-Shabab ban on planes using Mogadishu's airport. The plane landed successfully, yet under fire. – *Reuters, September 19*

September 20, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated a truck loaded with approximately 590 kilograms of explosives outside the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad. The huge bomb blast caused significant damage to the hotel and led to the deaths of at least 53 people; hundreds more were wounded. The bombing killed the Czech ambassador to Pakistan, in addition to two American officials with the U.S. Department of Defense. A group calling itself the "Islam Commandos" took credit for the operation; little is known about the group, and authorities suspect that the attack was actually conducted by either al-Qa`ida- or Taliban-affiliated militants. – *AP, September 21; AP, September 25; AFP, September 21*

September 20, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a security force convoy near Mir Ali in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing six people, three of whom were soldiers. – *Reuters, September 20*

September 20, 2008 (YEMEN): Yemen's foreign minister said that the September 17 attack on the U.S. Embassy in Sana`a "has the markings of al-Qa`ida." – *AP, September 20*

September 21, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): More than 140 workers involved in the construction of a military base were kidnapped by suspected Taliban gunmen in Farah Province. The workers were abducted while traveling in three buses in the province. – *Reuters, September 22*

September 21, 2008 (PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN): Pakistani security forces claimed that they opened fire on two U.S. helicopter gunships after they "violated Pakistan's airspace." The alleged incident occurred near North Waziristan Agency on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area. The U.S. Department of Defense denied the Pakistani account. – *AFP, September 22; AP, September 23*

September 21, 2008 (NORTH AFRICA): The leader of al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb appeared in a new videotape blasting a "new colonial offensive" by the West in North Africa. The leader, Abu Mus`ab `Abd al-Wadud (also known as Abdelmalek Droukdel), railed against the Algerian government and warned Muslims not to support the local "regimes of apostasy and treason." He also made a veiled reference to France's territorial security. – *AP, September 22*

September 21, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): Two Abu Sayyaf Group members who claimed to have met with wanted Jemaah Islamiyah members Dulmatin and Umar Patek surrendered to authorities. – *Philippine Daily Inquirer, September 23*

September 22, 2008 (FRANCE): The French parliament voted to maintain its military role in Afghanistan and announced that it would be reinforced with helicopters, intelligence drones and 100 more soldiers. – *AFP, September 25*

September 22, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb killed the governor of Registan district in Kandahar Province. The district governor's police chief was also killed in the blast. The Taliban claimed responsibility. – *AFP, September 22*

September 22, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A senior Afghan diplomat was abducted in Peshawar in Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province. The diplomat, Abdul Khaliq Farahi, was a candidate to become Afghanistan's next ambassador to Pakistan. His driver was killed during the ambush. – *AP, September 22; New York Times, September 22*



September 23, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide car bomber targeted a convoy of German and Afghan troops in Kunduz Province. There were no casualties other than the life of the bomber. – *Deutsche Welle, September 23*

September 23, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani security forces claimed they killed 10 suspected insurgents during an offensive in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *AP, September 23*

September 24, 2008 (GERMANY): A German court convicted a 25-year-old Moroccan man, Abdelali Miftah, of supporting a foreign terrorist organization and helping to found a terrorist cell. Miftah, who was sentenced to four years in jail, was accused of helping to recruit supporters for al-Qa`ida to fight in Iraq. Prosecutors claim that he was a “communications facilitator” for a Europe-based group that assisted al-Qa`ida. – *AP, September 24*

September 24, 2008 (IRAQ): Gunmen ambushed and killed 12 policemen and eight anti-al-Qa`ida fighters in the village of al-Dulaimat in Diyala Province. Some reports state that an additional 15 policemen were killed, bringing the total number of dead to 35. – *AFP, September 24; AFP, September 25*

September 24, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a Frontier Corps convoy in Quetta in Balochistan Province, resulting in the death of a teenage female student. Twenty-two others were injured in the blast. – *Daily Times, September 25*

September 24, 2008 (SOMALIA): Islamist militants and African Union peacekeepers engaged in intense fighting in Mogadishu. According to reports, at least 17 civilians were killed during the violence. – *CNN, September 24*

September 25, 2008 (GERMANY): Federal prosecutors issued a public alert seeking information on the locations of two suspected terrorists who had recently returned to Germany after attending terrorist training camps in Pakistan. The men, who are allegedly involved with the Islamic Jihad Union group, were identified as Eric Breininger, 21-years-old, a German

citizen and convert to Islam, and Houssain al-Malla, 23-years-old and a native of Lebanon. – *Washington Post, September 27*

September 25, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN): NATO officials said that Pakistani troops fired on ISAF helicopters in Afghanistan's Khost Province. Pakistani officials claim that the coalition helicopters crossed into Pakistani territory; NATO, however, responded that “at no time did ISAF helicopters cross into Pakistani airspace.” – *Voice of America, September 25*

September 26, 2008 (GERMANY): Authorities pulled two suspected terrorists from a plane in Cologne. The Somali-born men had left notes in their apartments near Cologne that suggested they intended to carry out a suicide mission. Their travel agenda showed that they planned to fly to Uganda via Amsterdam, and then from Uganda to Pakistan. One of the men was a Somali national, while the other was a German citizen born in Mogadishu. – *Washington Post, September 27*

September 26, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Most of the 140 civilian laborers who were abducted by Taliban fighters on September 21 were freed. After mediation between tribal elders and the Taliban, a Taliban spokesman said, “We have released 118 of these workers and the rest will be freed soon.” – *BBC, September 26*

September 26, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber targeted a militia commander working for U.S. forces in Khost Province. The commander was wounded, and five other people were killed in the blast. – *AP, September 26*

September 26, 2008 (ISRAEL): Pro-al-Qa`ida Palestinian group Jaysh al-Islam (Army of Islam) vowed to avenge the deaths of nine of its members who were killed in clashes with Hamas policemen on September 16. In the group's statement, it claimed that “revenge is a right that must be fulfilled,” and that the only reason it would forgive Hamas would be if the latter group declared an Islamic state in the Gaza Strip. A Hamas spokesman was unconcerned about the threats, and said, “The Army of Islam is allowed to act against the Israeli occupation but it must stay away from

internal affairs which is the job of the (Hamas) security services.” – *Reuters, September 26*

September 27, 2008 (SYRIA): A car bomb exploded outside Syrian security offices in Damascus, killing 17 people. No group claimed responsibility, although Syrian authorities believe that Sunni jihadists were responsible. – *AP, September 27; Jerusalem Post, October 1*

September 28, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban gunmen shot dead Malalai Kakar, the head of the city of Kandahar's department of crimes against women and the country's most high-profile policewoman. Her teenage son was wounded. – *AFP, September 28*

September 28, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber on a motorbike blew himself up near two police vehicles in Spin Boldak of Kandahar Province. Six people were killed. – *The Age, September 29*

September 28, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Gunmen attempted to assassinate Mohammad Hashim, the provincial council chief for Zabul Province. Although the attack, which occurred in Kandahar Province, failed to kill Hashim, four of his bodyguards died after exchanging gunfire with the assailants. – *AP, September 29*

September 28, 2008 (ALGERIA): A suicide car bomber attacked a military checkpoint in Bumerdes Province, killing three people. One of the two militants involved in the attack jumped out of the explosives-laden vehicle before it reached its target and was apprehended by authorities. Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb later claimed credit for the operation. – *AP, September 29; Reuters, October 1*

September 28, 2008 (THAILAND): Suspected separatist militants killed two Muslim village chiefs in southern Thailand. One of the chiefs was killed in Narathiwat Province, while the other in Pattani Province. – *AFP, September 29*

September 29, 2008 (GLOBAL): A new purported al-Qa`ida video appeared on Islamist web forums in which an unidentified narrator speaking Urdu criticizes Pakistan's current and previous leaders. The video tells Pakistani Muslims to prepare for a holy

war against corrupt governments. – *AP, September 29*

September 29, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Military statistics released today found that suicide attacks have killed almost 1,200 Pakistanis since July 2007. The majority of those killed were civilians. – *AP, September 29*

September 29, 2008 (LEBANON): A remotely-detonated car bomb ripped through a military bus near Tripoli, killing seven people, four of whom were soldiers. – *news.com.au, September 30*

September 30, 2008 (UNITED STATES): Director of the Central Intelligence Agency Michael Hayden told reporters that “all of the [terrorist] threats about which we are aware have threads that take them back into that Afghan/Pakistan border region, either in terms of command and control, or training, and direction.” – *Fox News, September 30*

September 30, 2008 (UNITED STATES): A U.S. district court sentenced Derrick Shareef to 35-years in jail for plotting a grenade attack at a mall filled with Christmas shoppers in Rockford, Illinois in 2006. Although at the time Shareef was an admirer of Usama bin Ladin, authorities found that he acted alone in the plot except for a paid government informant. – *Chicago Tribune, October 1; AP, September 30*

September 30, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghan President Hamid Karzai revealed that he has asked the Saudi Arabian government to help broker peace talks between Kabul and the Taliban leadership, led by Mullah Omar. An article in the *Financial Times* asserted that “according to a person familiar with the talks, the Saudis have been involved since July, when they were first approached by Pakistan-based Taliban clerics. The Saudis sent an envoy to Kabul and started shuttling between the two sides.” Karzai also made a direct appeal to Mullah Omar, stating that he would protect the Taliban chief from U.S.-led coalition forces if he returned to Afghanistan to “work for the peace and good of your people.” – *Financial Times, October 1*

September 30, 2008 (RUSSIA): A suicide car bomber attempted to assassinate Ingushetia’s interior minister, Mussa Medov, in the region’s

main city of Nazran. Although the explosion damaged Medov’s vehicle, he was not injured. – *Reuters, September 30*

October 1, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): The Australian Special Operations Task Group apprehended Mullah Saqi Dad, a Taliban commander responsible for attacks in Uruzgan Province and believed tied to senior Taliban leaders such as Mullah Omar. – *The Age, October 6*

October 1, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Various Pakistani media agencies have reported that Tehrik-i-Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud has died of kidney failure. Taliban spokesmen, however, have denied the claim, and they state that Mehsud is “fine and healthy.” – *Reuters, October 1*

October 1, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. aerial drone strike killed at least six people in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Pakistani media sources said that foreign militants were among the dead. – *Guardian, October 1*

October 2, 2008 (UNITED STATES): A federal appeals court overturned the convictions of Yemeni cleric Shaykh Mohammed Ali al-Moayad and his deputy, Mohammed Mohsen Zayed. The two men were convicted of supporting terrorists in early 2005. The court found that the men’s case was prejudiced by inflammatory testimony about unrelated terrorism links. The court ruled that the men can have new trials. – *AP, October 2*

October 2, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide car bomber detonated his explosives outside a Shi’a mosque in Zafaraniyya in southern Baghdad, killing 14 people. – *AP, October 2*

October 2, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives belt outside the Shi’a Rasul mosque in Baghdad, killing 10 people. – *AP, October 2*

October 2, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber attempted to assassinate Asfandiyar Wali Khan, the head of the Awami National Party, which controls Pakistan’s North-West Frontier Province. The attack occurred in Charsadda at the political leader’s home. Four people were killed in the blast, but Asfandiyar Wali escaped injury. – *Daily Telegraph, October 2*

October 2, 2008 (SUDAN): The U.S. Embassy in Khartoum released a warden message warning that an al-Qa`ida-affiliated group had threatened the U.S. government in addition to Americans in Sudan. The group that issued the threat identified itself as al-Qa`ida in the Land of the Two Niles. – *AFP, October 11*

October 2, 2008 (INDIA): Bombs ripped through shopping markets and a bus station in Agartala, the capital of Tripura state. At least five people were killed. Indian authorities believe that the Indian Mujahidin group was behind the attacks. – *The Australian, October 3*

October 3, 2008 (IRAQ): U.S. forces killed a senior leader of al-Qa`ida in Iraq, Mahir Ahmad Mahmud Zubaydi, in Baghdad. The U.S. military believes that Zubaydi, also known as Abu Rami, was responsible for “all terrorist operations” in east Baghdad. – *Los Angeles Times, October 5*

October 3, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. aerial drone fired missiles at a home in North Waziristan Agency of Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Pakistani authorities said at least nine people were killed in the explosion, including foreigners. – *Reuters, October 3*

October 4, 2008 (GLOBAL): American al-Qa`ida member Adam Gadahn appeared in a new video posted on Islamist web forums. The video, which references the recent U.S. economic downturn and fighting in Kashmir, proved that Gadahn was still alive, nixing speculation that he may have been killed in February. Gadahn attempted to link the financial turmoil in the United States to proof that “the enemies of Islam” face defeat. “The enemies of Islam are facing a crushing defeat, which is beginning to manifest itself in the expanding crisis their economy is experiencing,” Gadahn asserted. “A crisis whose primary cause, in addition to the abortive and unsustainable crusades they are waging in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq, is their turning their backs on Allah’s revealed laws, which forbid interest-bearing transactions, exploitation, greed and injustice in all its forms.” – *CNN, October 4; AP, October 4*

October 4, 2008 (IRAQ): Gunmen attacked a police station near Ramadi,

Anbar Province, and killed two policemen. – *Reuters, October 5*

October 4, 2008 (SOMALIA): The Islamist faction that retains control of Somalia's southern port city of Kismayo renamed the airport after Imam Ahmed Gurey, a 16<sup>th</sup> century Somali holy warrior. They also called on commercial airlines to use the airport. Somalia's Islamists retook control of Kismayo in August. – *AFP, October 4*

October 4, 2008 (THAILAND): Suspected Muslim separatists killed two government soldiers who were traveling on a motorcycle in Pattani Province. – *AP, October 4*

October 5, 2008 (IRAQ): U.S. forces killed the second-in-command of al-Qa`ida in Iraq, identified as Abu Qaswarah, a Moroccan native also known as Abu Sara. He was killed in Mosul, Ninawa Province. Later investigation revealed that Abu Qaswarah had Swedish citizenship. – *Reuters, October 15; TimesOnline, October 16*

October 5, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives after U.S. forces stormed the building in which he was in. Ten people were killed in the resultant blast, at least six of whom were civilians. – *Los Angeles Times, October 6*

October 5, 2008 (PAKISTAN): Suspected Taliban militants fired rockets at the home of Amir Haider Khan Hoti, the North-West Frontier Province's chief minister. There were no casualties from the attacks. – *AP, October 6*

October 6, 2008 (IRAQ): Gunmen killed an off-duty member of Iraq's special forces in Babil Province. – *Reuters, October 6*

October 6, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghanistan began registering voters for the fall 2009 presidential polls. A Taliban spokesman responded to the drive, stating, "It is clear that it will be fraudulent and this is all the work of the United States." – *AP, October 6*

October 6, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated his explosives at the home of a lawmaker, killing at least 20 people. The Shi'a lawmaker, Rashid Akbar Khan Nawani, was injured in the

blast. The attack took place in Punjab Province. – *Los Angeles Times, October 7*

October 7, 2008 (IRAQ): Iraqi forces arrested a woman suspected of leading efforts to recruit female suicide bombers for al-Qa`ida in Iraq. The suspect, identified as Ibitisma Odwan or "Mother Fatima," was arrested in Ba`quba, Diyala Province. – *AFP, October 7*

October 7, 2008 (IRAQ): Gunmen killed two Christian men in Mosul, Ninawa Province. – *Reuters, October 7*

October 7, 2008 (IRAQ): Gunmen stormed into a pharmacy in Mosul, Ninawa Province, and killed the pharmacist, who was a Christian. – *Reuters, October 7*

October 7, 2008 (IRAQ): During a gunfight between coalition forces and insurgents in Mosul, Ninawa Province, one U.S. soldier, one Iraqi policeman and one insurgent gunman were killed. Four insurgents were arrested. – *Reuters, October 7*

October 8, 2008 (IRAQ): A female suicide bomber detonated her explosives outside a courthouse in Ba`quba, Diyala Province, killing 11 people. A male suicide bomber was apprehended at the scene, as he failed to detonate his explosives vest. – *AP, October 9*

October 8, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Afghan and international troops killed at least six Taliban fighters during a sweep of Bakwa district in Farah Province. – *Reuters, October 9*

October 9, 2008 (IRAQ): A member of the al-Sadr bloc in the Iraqi parliament, Salih al-Ugaili, was killed by a bomb in eastern Baghdad. Two of his bodyguards were also killed in the blast. – *Reuters, October 9*

October 9, 2008 (IRAQ): A "sticky bomb" attached to a vehicle carrying employees of the Karbala governing council exploded, killing one of the employees and wounding two others. – *Reuters, October 9*

October 9, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Taliban fighters ambushed a convoy belonging to USPI, a U.S. security firm, in Farah Province. Two of the company's guards were killed, and 11 trucks part of

the convoy were set on fire by Taliban troops. – *Reuters, October 10*

October 9, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): U.S.-led and Afghan forces killed 12 Taliban militants in Uruzgan Province. – *Reuters, October 9*

October 9, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber penetrated one of the most heavily secured police facilities in Islamabad. Once inside the building—which housed Pakistan's anti-terrorism police—the bomber detonated his explosives. At least six officers were injured, and the building was largely destroyed. The attack occurred in Islamabad's heavily guarded Red Zone. There were conflicting reports on the incident, as the *International Herald Tribune* claimed that the attack may have involved a car bomb. – *International Herald Tribune, October 9; The Australian, October 10*

October 9, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. missile strike targeted an area in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Pakistani intelligence officials claim that at least nine people were killed. Some of those killed were believed to be foreigners. According to a security official speaking with Agence France-Presse, "There was a meeting of around 30 foreign Al-Qaeda and local Taliban commanders in the house of Hafiz Sahar Gul but the majority of them left the building ten minutes before the missile struck. The six Arabs who were killed are all believed to be lower level operatives." – *AP, October 10; AFP, October 10*

October 9, 2008 (SOMALIA): Witnesses told reporters that an unidentified aircraft bombed an Islamist rebel stronghold 18 miles southeast of Baidoa. According to one witness, "We heard a big crash after something like a plane had roared over us. I think they targeted al-Shabaab because we knew many of their battle-wagons were passing." It was not clear whether there were any casualties, or to which country the aircraft belonged. – *Reuters, October 9*

October 10, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber killed a provincial intelligence officer for Khost Province. Three policemen were wounded. – *Reuters, October 10*



October 10, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suicide car bomber attacked a meeting of pro-government tribesmen in Orakzai Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, killing at least 30 people. The bomber apparently drove his explosives-laden vehicle directly into a crowd of 500 tribesmen, and then detonated it. – *Voice of America, October 10; AP, October 11*

October 10, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): Authorities on Jolo Island in the southern Philippines killed an Abu Sayyaf Group member and captured three of his comrades. – *AFP, October 11*

October 11, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A suspected U.S. missile strike killed at least three people in Miran Shah, North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *AP, October 12*

October 11, 2008 (TURKEY): Authorities apprehended a suspected Kurdish female militant who was possibly planning to launch a suicide bomb attack in Istanbul. According to authorities, “The suspect—a woman in her 30s posing as pregnant—carried 8.8 kilograms (19 pounds) of explosives, 15 detonators and a manual button in her bag when she was arrested in the downtown district of Sisli after a police pursuit.” – *AFP, October 11*

October 11, 2008 (PHILIPPINES): Authorities arrested a member of the Abu Sayyaf Group who was believed to be involved in the June kidnapping of journalist Ces Drilon. The operative, identified as Marcial Totoh Jabarot (also known as Abu Cesar), was arrested on Jolo Island in the southern Philippines. – *Philippine Daily Inquirer, October 12*

October 12, 2008 (IRAQ): A suicide car bomber targeted an Iraqi patrol in Mosul, Ninawa Province, killing five civilians and injuring 35. A second suicide car bomber struck the same area approximately 20 minutes after the first blast. The second blast injured at least 25 more people. – *Bloomberg, October 13*

October 12, 2008 (IRAQ): A sniper killed two Iraqi soldiers in Mansur district of Baghdad. – *Reuters, October 12*

October 12, 2008 (IRAQ): Gunmen burst into a shop in Mosul, Ninawa Province, and killed the shop's owner, a Christian

male. – *Reuters, October 13*

October 12, 2008 (IRAQ): Gunmen stormed the house of a policeman and killed him in Mosul, Ninawa Province. – *Reuters, October 13*

October 12, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Approximately 60 Taliban fighters were killed when they attempted to launch a surprise attack on Afghan forces in Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province. Hundreds of Taliban fighters attacked Lashkar Gah from three sides, but they were repelled by NATO airstrikes. – *Guardian, October 12*

October 12, 2008 (PAKISTAN): The Frontier Corps claimed to have killed 27 Taliban fighters in an airstrike in Orakzai Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *Daily Times, October 13*

October 12, 2008 (LEBANON): Security officials arrested a group of alleged extremists—some of whom tied to Fatah al-Islam—involved in recent attacks against the Lebanese Army. Officials claimed the cell was involved in the September 29 attack on a military bus in Tripoli. The group was also blamed for an August 13 bus bombing, along with another attack in May. – *BBC, October 13*

October 13, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Coalition forces killed five militants during an operation targeting a foreign fighter network in Ghazni Province. – *Reuters, October 14*

October 13, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A government official announced that an estimated 15 people were killed in clashes between Taliban fighters and pro-government tribesmen and government security forces. Two of the dead were tribesmen. The clashes occurred on October 12 and 13 in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *AP, October 13*

October 13, 2008 (PAKISTAN): A remote-controlled bomb exploded near the vehicle of Shamin Khan, a secular Pakistani political leader. Khan, a member of the Awami National Party, was injured in the blast, which occurred in the North-West Frontier Province. – *CNN, October 13*

October 14, 2008 (IRAQ): Gunmen opened fire on a U.S. military patrol in western Baghdad, killing one U.S. soldier. According to the Associated Press, “It was the first combat death suffered by American forces in the capital since September 30, when the military said a soldier was killed by small arms fire in northern Baghdad.” – *AP, October 15*

October 14, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Kai Eide, the top UN representative for Afghanistan, warned that insurgents were likely to increase the number of attacks in the coming weeks before the onset of winter. Eide also said that despite some recent setbacks, he would “caution against the kind of gloom-and-doom statements we’ve seen recently” about Afghanistan. – *Washington Post, October 15*

October 14, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): The head of Kandahar Province’s Social Affairs Department was shot to death by two unidentified gunmen on a motorcycle. According to one report, the attack, which occurred in Kandahar city, was “conducted in the same manner as the September 28 assassination of Lt.-Col. Malalai Kakar, Kandahar’s first female police detective and the highest-ranking policewoman in southern Afghanistan.” – *Canadian Press, October 14*

October 14, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb destroyed a vehicle carrying NATO soldiers in eastern Afghanistan, killing three of them. – *AFP, October 14*

October 14, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): Nine civilians were killed after a bomb ripped through a bus in Uruzgan Province. It is believed that the bomb was intended for Afghan or international security forces. The Taliban denied involvement. – *AFP, October 14*

October 14, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): An Afghan official claimed that international forces killed approximately 70 Taliban fighters in airstrikes in Helmand Province. Afghan officials allege that most of the killed were foreign fighters, including Arabs and Pakistanis. – *Reuters, October 15; AFP, October 15*

October 14, 2008 (SOMALIA): Burundi’s spokesman for the army told reporters that the country had

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completed an additional deployment of 850 soldiers to Somalia. The soldiers, part of an African Union peacekeeping mission, will join another group of 850 soldiers previously deployed to the country, raising Burundi's total contribution to 1,700 troops. There are now approximately 3,400 AU peacekeepers in Somalia, still short of the 8,000 planned commitment. – *AFP, October 14*

October 14, 2008 (THAILAND): Thailand extended the emergency decree imposed on its three southernmost provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat for an additional three months. The extended decree is now set to expire on January 19, 2009. – *TNA, October 14*

October 14, 2008 (RUSSIA): Russia's Federal Security Service claimed that it foiled an al-Qa`ida-related attack on Sochi, the site for the 2014 Winter Olympics, during the summer. The attack was allegedly planned by Doku Umarov, a Chechen separatist warlord. – *Bloomberg, October 14*

October 15, 2008 (UNITED KINGDOM): Nicky Reilly, a 22-year-old male Muslim convert from Plymouth, pleaded guilty to a failed suicide bomb attack on a busy restaurant in Devon on May 22. According to a press report about the May 22 incident, Reilly "used the internet to research how to make bombs using caustic soda, kerosene, drain cleaner and nails...He had received support from two unidentified people who contacted him on an extremist website. Police said Reilly had been 'preyed upon, radicalised and taken advantage of.'" Reilly will be sentenced on November 21. – *Reuters, October 15*

October 15, 2008 (IRAQ): Major-General Ali al-Hamdani, the intelligence chief for three of Iraq's southern provinces, was injured in a roadside bomb blast in Karbala Province. – *Reuters, October 15*

October 15, 2008 (IRAQ): Mortar rounds landed near the Sunni Abu Hanifa shrine in Adhamiyya district of Baghdad. Two people were killed. – *Reuters, October 15*

October 15, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): An estimated 18 Taliban fighters were killed after a four hour battle in Lashkar Gah in Helmand Province. – *Reuters, October 15*

October 15, 2008 (AFGHANISTAN): A roadside bomb killed three policemen in Logar Province. – *Reuters, October 15*

October 15, 2008 (THAILAND): Authorities surrounded five members of the Runda Kumpulan Kecil insurgent group in southern Thailand's Yala Province. A gunfight ensued, and three of the five escaped, while the other two were apprehended. – *Bangkok Post, October 15*